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BESSIE MELVILLE



BESSIE MELVILLE;

OR,

PRAYER BOOK INSTRUCTIONS CARRIED
OUT INTO LIFE.

A SEQUEL

TO

“The Little Episcopalian.”

BY M. A. C.

“Plant in the heart of childhood the seed of religious truth;
foster its growth with a mother's prayers and instructions, and
sweet will be the blossoms of early piety, and precious the
fruits of maturer years.”

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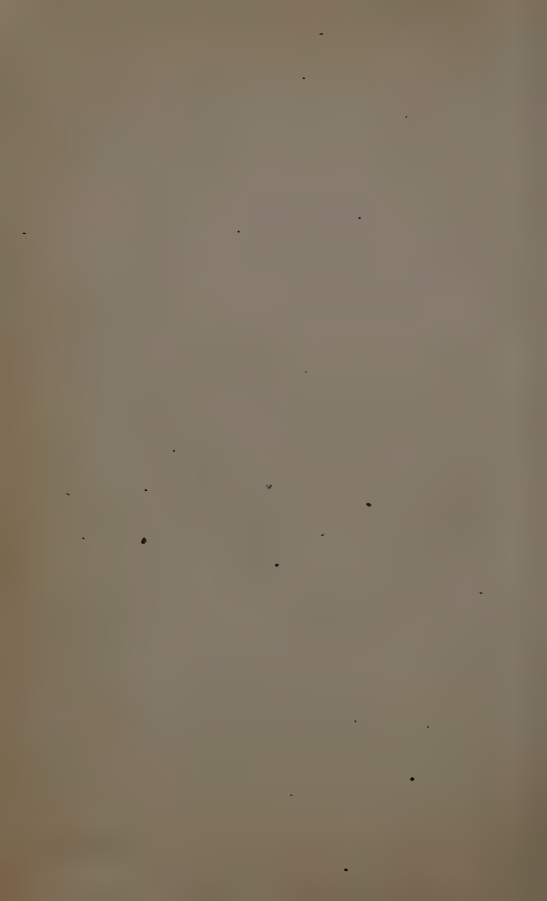
1870.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853,

By DANIEL DANA, JR.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

TO
WILLIE,
IN THE SPIRIT WORLD
This Book
IS REVERENTLY INSCRIBED BY
"SISTER."



P R E F A C E.

It is hoped that the readers of "The Little Episcopalian" will not be unwilling to renew their acquaintance with some of its characters. They have seen how the teachings of the Bible and the Church could be understood and appreciated by a little child; how they could be her pleasure in life, and her comfort in death. It may now be neither unpleasant, nor unprofitable, to follow some of the other characters out into the walks of active life, and see how these same teachings, when listened to and obeyed, can mould the character for usefulness in this world as well as happiness in the next. The author sincerely trusts that this volume may be the means of unfolding to some heart some of the value of that great blessing which our Saviour has granted us in the possession of the Prayer Book and the Church.

It has been found necessary to alter the dates of "The

Little Episcopalian," in order to provide for the development of the more tangled incidents of the present story.

It is proper to add, that the author belongs to a brave congregation which, within a few years, has fought its way up from nothing. It has outgrown its little church, and is now engaged, in a spirit of gallant enterprise and self-denying liberality, in erecting a fair and spacious temple to the Lord. In this work almost every child takes his share, and its projectors would leave nothing undone to secure a complete success. Should this book find as much favor with the Church as its predecessor, its profits will be devoted to the new "Church of the Nativity."

M. A. C.

HUNTSVILLE ALABAMA,
Easter 1858.

BESSIE MELVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

I give thee to thy native dust,
Thou loved and honored form:
I murmur not, for God is just,
And I am but a worm.
I kneel upon thy grave, while prayer
Bursts from my aching heart:
O Saviour, reunite us where
We cannot part.

Six years had passed away. The long grass grew over little Jennie's grave; and another close beside it, upon which the sod had been newly laid, was full in view from a window in Mr. Kennedy's house, at which Bessie Melville was sitting. Again her young heart was filled with sorrow: not the frantic violence of that childish grief with which she had bewailed the loss of a sister-child, but the more desolate sad-

ness which belongs to the orphan. And more than this: since her mother's death she had found a home and kind, affectionate sympathy in the family circle of the excellent minister; but now this tie was also to be sundered, and in a few days she was to bid adieu to those warm-hearted friends, and henceforward to seek companionship and sympathy amid the varied characters of a boarding-school.

In her hand she held an open letter which she had often read before, and whose pages were stained by the many tears which had been wept over it, for days and weeks gone by; and, as she tried to read again its well-remembered words, tears blinded her eyes, and she wept long and bitterly.

The letter read thus:—

“I have done, my dearest child, with earth and earthly things, and from the borders of the grave I entreat you to listen to the last words of counsel your mother will ever give you. You are very young; to your excitable, impulsive temperament the world will present many allurements, and the paths of earthly pleasure

many attractions. Uncontrolled, your disposition will prove to you a temptation and a snare; restrained and guided by religious principle, it will make you an earnest-minded, zealous Christian. I would not have you morose and gloomy. God loves to see you happy, and has placed you in a beautiful world, and surrounded you with many means of happiness, which it would be ungrateful for you to disregard. But He has also given you an infallible test by which to try all the pleasures which seem so attractive; and I entreat you, my child, faithfully, honestly, earnestly, to use that test, and to engage in no pursuit, and to enjoy no pleasures, which will not bear to be tried by the Word of God.

“You will find in my work-basket the little Bible and Prayer-Book, which are worth more than all else that I can leave you. Take them, Bessie, use them constantly, prize them highly, let them guide and direct all your ways. They are old, and worn, and unsightly now, but they are precious. They were given to me in my childhood, by your grandfather, before I had learned their value; but for thirty years they have been my companions, counsellors and com-

forters. From their pages your sister learned the way to that heavenly home to which she was so early called, and now I commit them to the keeping of my other child, praying that God may, through them, guide her thither also.

“You, my child, can never know the bitterness of this separation to your mother’s heart. You will, it is true, feel lonely and desolate; you will miss the mother who has sympathized in your childish sorrows, participated in your joys, and loved you so devotedly; but you cannot know the feeling of my heart at the thought of leaving you, so young and excitable, surrounded by the allurements of an enticing world. But for the sustaining promises of the baptismal covenant, my fears for you would be overwhelming. As it is, my anxieties are calmed, and my fears sweetly soothed, by the words of that precious promise which at your baptism was uttered by a human voice, and which now seems to be whispered in my ear by my covenant-keeping Saviour himself: ‘Which promise He, for his part, will most surely keep and perform.’ This, Bessie, is all the hope I have in leaving you; but it is a precious one, and upon it I calmly

and sweetly rely. With your Saviour for your friend, I am not afraid to leave you what the world calls an orphan. Go to Him, my child, in all situations and circumstances; and, whenever in doubt or trouble your young heart swells with grief at the thought that you have no mother, go to Him, and He will sympathize with you more tenderly, and counsel you more unerringly, than your mother ever has done, or ever could do.

“Farewell, my precious child. ‘Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection I commit you.’ You need no assurances of mine to make you believe, that if in heaven the spirits of the just are permitted to watch over the loved ones of earth, your mother’s spirit and Jennie’s will always linger lovingly about you.

“YOUR DYING MOTHER.”

Bessie needed not to read this letter, for its every word was engraved upon her memory, and, as she sat with it in her hand, a rude touch aroused her from her reverie, and there, at her side stood what had once been Jennie’s lamb, now quite a veteran, and the most privi-

leged member of Mr. Kennedy's household. He thrust his head into Bessie's lap, expecting a caress; but the sight of him awakened the memories of her childhood's home, and, putting both her arms around his neck, she sobbed aloud.

Presently a soft little hand was laid upon her cheek, and a childish voice said:

"What makes you cry so, Bessie? Can I do any thing for you?"

"No, Mary," replied Bessie; "I do not want any thing that you can give me. I want my dear old home, with the mother and sister that once I had, and these neither you nor any other human being can give back to me again."

"Oh, Bessie," said the child, as she looked up earnestly into her face, "surely you do not want your mother and Jennie back again in this world?"

"And why not, Mary? Oh, if you were the lonely, desolate orphan that I am, how your heart would long to see your mother once more."

"Yes, Bessie, I know that. I love my mother very dearly, and should miss her very much if

she should die; but I never should want her to come back to me."

Bessie looked with surprise at the child's earnest face, and asked—

"Why, Mary?"

"Because," replied she, solemnly, "it would be God that made her die; and God never can do any thing that is not right; and if it is right for Him to take her away, it could not be right for her to stay here, and I could not want her back."

Bessie was startled. The child's earnest manner, her simple trust in God's goodness and mercy, seemed but a re-echo of what, in years gone by, she had heard from her own little sister's lips, and a chord was touched in her heart which vibrated sweetly with those pleasant memories.

"You are right, Mary," she said, "and I was very wrong to say what I did. You are a sweet little comforter; and I would like to know where you learned, young as you are, to console the distressed."

"Mother taught me," replied Mary. "She showed me a verse in the Bible, which says that

God does not willingly make us sorry. She says that He is always more grieved than we are, when we are in trouble; and I know, Bessie, if He was more sorry than you were, when your mother died, it must have been very right for her to die, or else He never could have taken her away from you."

"Yes, Mary, that is all true; and I know that it is wrong and very selfish for me to wish my dear mother back again in this world, where she suffered so much sickness and sorrow. But sometimes I feel so lonely, and seem to have nobody to love me and care for me, and I cannot help wishing, for a moment, to have my kind and loving mother with me once more."

"Oh, Bessie, don't say that nobody loves you, or cares for you. I love you dearly, and so do father and mother; and as to Willie, he loves you, I believe, better than he does all of us put together."

"Bravo! my little Mary," said a cheerful voice, as a bright smiling face peered in at the window. "Pray, who gave you the power to look into my heart, and to weigh my affections, and who taught you how much of my love to give

to each member of the family? I do love Bessie very dearly, but who told you that I did not love my little pet sister just as much?" and with one bound he sprang through the window, and clasping Mary in his arms, shook her heartily and merrily.

"You told me so, yourself," replied she. "I do not mean by words," she added, as she saw Willie's eyes dilate with astonishment, "but I can tell by the way you act. You love to take me in your arms, and play with me, and run after me in the yard; but you never say to me, as you do to Bessie, 'Come, and let us go and walk by ourselves in the grove;' or, 'take this rose and wear it in your hair for my sake;' or"—

Willie's face became crimson as the communicative child went on to specify her reasons for giving the first place in his affections to Bessie, and he turned to his old pet, who had sought his side, and tried to hide his confusion by caressing him.

A glance at Bessie's countenance showed him, by the traces of recent tears, that her heart was very sad; and although his, too, was heavy

with sorrow at the thought of the separation which a few days would effect, and the long months which would intervene before they should meet again, yet he determined, with his characteristic unselfishness, to do all in his power to make her last hours at his home as pleasant as possible.

"Come, Bessie," he said, cheerfully, "get your bonnet, and let us take a walk. The air is soft and pleasant, and we have the promise of a glorious sunset. We will go to the hill, where we will have a fine view of it."

Bessie silently arose, and after they had reached the porch, Willie called out—

"Come along, Mary, I forgot to ask you. You may go with us if you wish it."

"No, I will not," replied she, as she came running out after them; and then added, looking up archly into his face, "it is just as I said. When you have Bessie, you do not care for anybody else; you even forget your little sister, when she is standing right before your eyes;" and as the crimson flush mounted again to Willie's brow, and she saw that he was teased, she added, gaily—

“For shame, you naughty boy! to love any body better than the sister who thinks you are the very best brother in the world.”

Bessie was too sorrowful to be affected by Mary's volubility, even if she had heard it; but she felt as if she could not talk, and Willie was so thoroughly abashed that it required several minutes for him to recover himself; they therefore walked some distance in unbroken silence.

It was a lovely afternoon in the early southern autumn; one of those days when the balminess of spring-time seems to linger around the decaying year, and a soft, hazy atmosphere enwraps nature in a quiet beauty akin to the dreaminess of a moon-light night. There was, as yet, nothing that betokened the sterility of approaching winter. The frost had not yet blighted the summer verdure; it had only left its gentle and beautiful impress here and there upon some majestic tree, whose every leaf glowed in the richness of its varied dyes, and stood like some towering cluster of gorgeous flowers.

The calm beauty of the scene was soothing

to Bessie's troubled heart, and she was the first to speak.

"I have been thinking, Willie, of leaving all of you, and going with my sad, heavy heart, among strangers who will have no feelings in unison with mine, or sympathy with my grief. I thought that I had already realized that I was an orphan, but I find that I have not yet taken in the depth of desolation contained in that dreary word. I have been wondering, Willie, why it is that I am so bereaved; why I am left thus forlorn and friendless while others of my young companions around me have a happy home gladdened by the affectionate care of father and mother, and the pleasant companionship of brothers and sisters? O, Willie! what is it I have done? how have I sinned, that I should be thus punished?"

Willie waited a moment, and then said very gently:

"The Bible tells us, Bessie, that these heavy trials are often sent to God's most favored children. Sometimes they are designed to punish us for sin, but sometimes to 'try our patience for the example of others, and that our

faith may be found in the day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honorable to the increase of glory and endless felicity,' as the Prayer-Book says. And then, too," he added, "there have been many things to soften the blow; many incidents of mercy that ought to moderate your grief—your mother's holy example and peaceful end, and fragrant memory; the comfort of being with her to the very last, and the affectionate words you have in her own hand-writing. O, Bessie, 'like as a father chasteneth his son, in that way, and not in an unloving and angry way, the Lord thy God doth chasten thee.' You have some friends left. You know that while my father and mother live, their home shall be yours, and" he added in a low but earnest tone, "when they are gone, while God spares me, you shall never be homeless."

The change in his tone of voice as he solemnly uttered these last words, aroused Bessie, and as she looked up into his face, she met his affectionate gaze. She was neither surprised nor disconcerted, for, from her earliest childhood, but more especially since Jennie's death, she had been as much accustomed to his demonstrations

of affection as if he had been her own brother, and she was now too much absorbed in her own sorrow to suspect that any feeling save that of compassionate sympathy had prompted that vow.

"I hope, dear Willie," she replied, "that you and your kind parents will not think when you see me so sad, that I do not appreciate your kindness, or that I am very ungrateful. I know that you are kind and affectionate, and I thank you most heartily for it, but just now I only feel that I have received a stunning blow; I can as yet scarcely recognize that it is a loving hand that dealt it, and that it is accompanied with some great mercies. You know that I am excitable, and now I feel nothing, know nothing, realize nothing, except that I have no mother!"

There are times in the life of every one, when under the pressure of heavy grief, words of comfort, however soothingly spoken, have no power to console; when all the comfort that the stricken spirit is able to take in is the sympathy of silence. Willie had learned this, so he made no reply to Bessie, but gently drawing

her arm within his own, he led her without a word to the top of the hill from whence they were to watch the sunset. He felt her whole frame trembling with emotion, but without appearing to notice it he quietly seated her upon a fallen tree, and hoping that the beautiful landscape which was now spread out before her might calm her excited feelings, he withdrew a few paces behind her that she might feel herself alone. From a little distance he watched her countenance as with strained eyes she leaned forward to drink in all the loveliness of that sunset-scene. In a few moments the expression of suffering upon her face gave way to one of delight, and clasping her hands she said, in a smothered voice—

“Just like my mother’s dying bed!”

Willie turned and looked at the scene. It was indeed a beautiful type of a Christian’s death-bed. Not a cloud was to be seen, and yet the declining sun did not go down dazzling the beholder with a blaze of light, but he gently sunk to rest with the brightness of his glory mellowed and subdued by the misty mantle which enwrapped all nature.

And so, thought Willie, did the sun of her life go down, unclouded by doubt and fear, but wrapped in a veil of penitence and humility. She trembled while she trusted, realizing her own sinfulness while she confidently reposed in the all-sufficiency of her Saviour's righteousness. He gazed in silence a few minutes, and then taking Bessie's arm led her home without a word. He soon perceived that the quiet beauty of nature had soothed her more effectually than any human comforter could have done, and he rejoiced to see, from the expression of her countenance, that the storm within had for the present abated.

CHAPTER II.

"Thine eyes in me the sheep behold,
Whose feet have wandered from thy fold,
That, guideless, helpless, strives in vain
To find its safe retreat again;
Now listens, if perchance his ear
The Shepherd's well-known voice may hear;
Now, as the tempests round it blow,
In plaintive accents vents its woe.
Great Ruler of this earthly ball,
Do thou my erring steps recall:
Oh seek thou him, who thee has sought,
Nor turns from thy decrees his thought."

MERRICK.

EVENING prayers were over, and the household had scattered to their various employments. Bessie sat in the solitude of her own chamber, looking from her window into the church-yard, where the full-orbed moon shone sadly down upon the quiet graves.

The storm that had swept over her heart had passed away, but it had left her exhausted. She could not read, she could not think, and, as in the soft moonlight she distinctly recognized

her mother's grave and Jennie's, she was half dreaming, half musing of her old home, her mother and sister, and then of heaven, their happiness and her loneliness. From this reverie she was aroused by a gentle tap at the door, and Mrs. Kennedy entered.

She seated herself at Bessie's side, and said:

"In a few days, my child, you are going to leave us, and there is one thing which yet remains to be done. I have brought you the key of your mother's cabinet, and wish you to examine its contents. Most probably it contains many papers which stranger-eyes have no right to look into, and yet it is necessary that your lawyers should examine into the condition of the estate, and especially necessary that they should see if your mother did not leave a will. Now, I wish you to be the first to invade the sanctity of that cabinet. You can take out all the private papers, but you must be careful to leave the business documents untouched. This should, probably, have been done before, but now it can be delayed no longer, and I have brought you the key, that you may select any time when you feel most adequate to the task."

"I will do it to-night, Mrs. Kennedy."

"I would not advise you to this, my dear. You look very tired, and I think it would be much better for you to wait until the morning."

"No, Mrs. Kennedy," replied Bessie, "I prefer to do it now. It will not be, as you suppose, a painful task. I rather think that any thing which would bring me into close communion with my mother would be a relief to me. I know that she had some sacred associations connected with that old cabinet. It was the depository of my father's miniature, and of his letters to her, both before and after their marriage; and, while examining its recesses, I shall feel that I am in her immediate presence."

"Very well, Bessie; you must of course be governed by your own feelings in this matter. If you are going to undertake it now, you ought to begin at once, or else you will encroach too much upon your hours of sleep. Good-night, my dear."

"Mrs. Kennedy put her arms around Bessie, and kissed her, and then said gently: "Try, my child, and not be too sad. God has granted

you tender mercies, even in the midst of your heavy bereavement. I cannot supply your mother's place, and this cannot be to you altogether what your old home was; but I will be to you a second mother, and this shall be your second home."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Kennedy," said poor Bessie, in a choking voice. "Do not think I am ungrateful; I am only broken-hearted."

Mrs. Kennedy closed the door, and Bessie was again alone. She sat perfectly still a little while, and then went to the cabinet and pressed the key. She opened the little drawer nearest to her, and in it she found a morocco case which contained two miniatures, those of her father and mother, taken immediately after their marriage. Her father she did not at all remember; but, in the dim distance of her earliest childhood she recollected sitting in her mother's lap, while she told her, with fast-dropping tears, what a loving father she had lost, and how the holy angels took him away because he was too good to stay on earth.

But that mother's face! how well she remembered that. She gazed with eagerness

upon it, beaming with the freshness of unclouded youth, and radiant with the impress of a spirit refined and purified by an indwelling religious principle.

In a little book, in the same drawer, were recorded, by her own hand, the dates of the baptism of her children, the confirmation of herself, her husband, and children, and the death of her husband and of Jennie. Close by was a long ringlet of brown hair, which her childish taste had so much admired upon her sister's head; and there, too, was a lock of soft black hair, which her mother had often told her she might look at, but must not touch, and which she had been taught to reverence as a memorial of her father.

Before all these relics of the past Bessie stood like one entranced. Her bounding heart leaped over the chasm which divided her from that happy time, and again she was a merry-hearted child, in that pleasant home, with a gentle mother to love and guide her, and a little sister for her companion. She went over in memory many of the incidents of her childhood. She forgot that she was an orphan; forgot that from

the window close by she could look upon the graves of all those whom she had so dearly loved. For a while she was again the thoughtless, impulsive Bessie Melville of by-gone years to whom sorrow was but a name.

The night wore away, but Bessie knew it not. At length she awoke from her deep reverie, and but that she found herself standing before that open cabinet, with strained eyes staring upon that long curl of Jennie's, which she held in her hand, she might have fancied that she had been in a profound slumber, dreaming sweetly of her childhood's home. A feeling of utter weariness and exhaustion reminded her how severely her strength had been tried that day, by fatigue and excitement, and she determined to postpone any farther examination into the contents of the cabinet until the morrow. Sadly and reverently she replaced every thing just as she had found it, and endeavored to close the drawer; but finding some difficulty, she placed one hand upon the solid wood, in order more effectually to bring all her strength to the assistance of the other, in shutting it. It was closed, and as she removed the other hand,

a little door, which had been unconsciously opened by the pressure of a secret spring, flew back, and revealed two miniature shelves just large enough to contain two small packages of letters. They were old, and yellow, and worn, but evidently tied up with great care; and Bessie concluded that they must have been a very valuable treasure to her mother. She thought at once of her father's letters, in years long gone by, and wishing again to look at his signature, she opened one and turned to the last page. To her surprise it was signed—

“Your broken-hearted sister, JENNIE.”

Bessie was amazed. She had never heard her mother allude to her sister, and now knew for the first time that she ever had one. Eagerly she turned to the beginning of the letter, whose contents were as follows:

“From the wilds of the far North-West, surrounded on all sides by savage Indian tribes, in a country where the foot of the white man has seldom trodden, I write to you, my dearest sister, scarcely indulging the hope that this letter will ever reach you. Oh! if I could but see

you once more; if I could but hear again your once familiar voice, I would ask no greater earthly blessing. In all the waywardness, and obstinacy, and sin, of my youth; in all the trouble and sorrow of my maturer years, my heart has clung to my twin-sister with unfaltering love, and the grief I have caused you to bear has not been the least bitter ingredient in my cup.

Of my present condition, I have nothing to tell you but a story of unmitigated sadness. Of my six children, God has mercifully removed all except the two youngest; and for this blessing I daily thank Him. About six months ago, my wretched husband added to all his other crimes that of forsaking me and marrying an Indian woman, closely allied to the chief of the tribe. My little boy, Herbert, a child of three years, attracted the attention of the chief, by his singular beauty and wonderful muscular development, and he insisted upon having him, that he might train him in the tactics of Indian warfare. To this his father madly consented. I exhausted every argument which a frantic mother could suggest, but it was all in vain. My child

was taken from me, and transferred to the household of the chief, where he is becoming thoroughly initiated into all the horrors of savage life. He is beyond the reach of my guidance, and counsels, and influence, but, thank God! he never can get beyond the reach of his mother's prayers. Anxious and distressed as I must be about him, still must I hope and believe that a merciful Saviour will take care of him. Those blessed words of the baptismal covenant 'which promise He for his part will most surely keep and perform,' ring constantly in my ears with tones of sweet assurance, and stay and support my aching heart when it has nothing else to rest upon. Yes, sister, strange as it may seem, both my children have, here in this savage wilderness, had their brow bathed with the waters of Holy Baptism, and signed with the blessed emblem of our redemption. It is just a year since a holy man of God passed through this Indian country; and his presence during those two brief days, and the words of comfort that he spoke, and the precious services I enjoyed, made me feel when he was gone that I had indeed 'entertained an angel un-

awares.' My little girl was just six weeks old, and to guard against interruption, we carried the children into the very depths of the forest, where, beneath a spreading oak, four little mounds marked the quiet resting-place of my other children. The minister read every word of the Baptismal Office, and to my famished soul how solemn was that service. The thought seemed to press me down as with a mighty weight. That spacious forest cathedral, whose deep blue arch was the workmanship of the great Architect of nature, seemed to be consecrated to the service of Almighty God by the solemn rite which admitted my little children to the privileges of a Saviour's fold. And then and there, while kneeling upon that fresh, green sod, came a thought into my heart which others might deem enthusiastic, but which you, mother, Christian mother that you are, will appreciate. I looked into the future, far down the lapse of years, and again I heard the opening words of the Church service:—'The Lord is in his holy temple;' not spoken, as then, to one weak, trembling woman, amid that vast solitude, but read in the Indian tongue, to a Christianized Indian

congregation, within the walls of a church, by a faithful and self-denying missionary; and then came the thought which thrilled me as with an electric touch, 'Why may not my own little Herbert be this very missionary?' From my knees I fell prostrate upon the ground, and sent up the cry,—

"O, my Father, grant me but this happiness, and in comparison with it all that I have suffered these long, long years, will seem indeed but 'a light affliction which was but for a moment.'

"Words, my dear sister, are too feeble to express to you my enjoyment of that service. What holy memories it awakened! how it carried me back into the long-gone but well-remembered past!—to the village church with its little congregation, and our loving father with his eye wandering now and then from the sacred page which he was reading, to his little twin daughters in the pew right before him. Long years have passed since then, but those old, familiar words touched a chord which, amid the jarring troubles and sorrows of my present life, vibrated sweetly and pleasantly with a strain of my early home.

“Worn and weary with life’s pilgrimage, how do I long once more to use that liturgy; to join my voice with that of others in entreating the forgiveness of our ‘Almighty and most merciful Father!’ My desolation seems complete, and I feel that I am indeed an orphan when alone on my knees I say, ‘Our Father,’ and know that there is no human being to unite with me in my prayer.

“From the day on which in baptism I consecrated my child to the service of God, until he was taken from me, six months afterwards, I devoted all my energies to his instruction. I tried faithfully and with prayer to imprint upon his young memory gospel truths, and to touch his infant heart and enlist his affections by stories of his Saviour’s love; and although he was altogether too young to understand exactly what I meant, still I tried to familiarize him with the thought that he did not belong to me—that I had given him away to his heavenly Father, and that He wanted him when he grew to be a man, to tell the Indians about Jesus Christ who died for them. Those six months were the least miserable portion of my

married life. My whole soul was absorbed in training my little missionary boy; but when in one dark hour all my purposes were so cruelly frustrated, and my child taken away from the holy influences and guardianship of a mother's love, and exposed to all the horrors of heathenish vice, my faith wavered and faltered, and for a while I saw in this dispensation not the chastening of a loving Father, but the stern displeasure of an angry Judge, visiting me for the grievous sin of my youth. Now and then a thought steals into my soul like a messenger from heaven, but my trembling heart fears to take hōld of it, for it seems too full of comfort, and I am well assured that there is for me no more comfort or rest this side the grave.

“I know that God works in a mysterious way, and that it is not often that we can find a clue by which to trace his dispensations; but I have sometimes thought, that, perhaps, He has chosen this very way, unpropitious as it seems, to prepare my child for his missionary work; perhaps He has, in his providence, placed him where he will most thoroughly learn the language and character and customs of the people

whom he is hereafter to enlighten. But then comes the thought: who is to enlighten and educate, and Christianize him? who is to teach him that vice and crime, revenge and robbery, deceit and cunning are not right in the sight of God, and praiseworthy among men? and, bewildered and broken-hearted, I seem to have neither faith nor hope left. I wish that I could have one letter of sympathy and love from you, but no tidings of you can reach me in this Indian waste, where there is no post-office within a hundred miles. A chance traveller, a poor and ignorant man, sought shelter last night in my cabin, and has promised to put this letter in the mail at the first town that he reaches.

“I have written to you, my sister, at great length, and thus to pour out my heart has been a great relief, even although, while I write, the thought has more than once suggested itself, that, perhaps, at this very moment you may be in the spirit-world, whose bliss can never be marred by tidings of human woe. Life is a heavy burden to me, and but for my little, helpless babe, whom I call Mary Melville, for you, how should I long to flee away and be

at rest! And yet I do not murmur. Even in my most wicked and rebellious hours, I have realized that my life of sorrow was but a righteous retribution for my sin, but I have learned, long since, patiently to wait for, in another world, the mercy which I no longer hope to receive in this. If my sin can only be forgiven, and washed away there, I am content to suffer here. Farewell, a long farewell, my best-beloved sister. I feel that this is the last earthly communication we shall ever have. There but remains for me the constant prayer and the precious hope that we shall be re-united in that world where the fear of separation shall never mar the enjoyment of full, and perfect, and eternal intercourse.

“Ever pray for your broken-hearted sister,

“JENNIE.”

“INDIAN TERRITORY, *May*, 1832.”

The perusal of this long letter, so far from enlightening Bessie's ignorance, only left her in a maze of bewilderment, with just enough information to awaken new conjectures. She only learned that she had once had an aunt, a twin sister of her mother, who had been very unhap

pily married, and whose heart seemed stung by bitter remorse for some youthful sin; but what that sin was, what she was doing, so far removed from civilization, why she did not return to her sister whom she loved so much, all these were mysteries which the letter did not solve. It did not even reveal any name for her aunt, except that of Jennie, and she at once concluded that her sister was called for her. But then her mother's strange silence with regard to this sister whom she loved well enough to perpetuate her name in the family, was what Bessie could not at all comprehend. She did not deem it strange that in her thoughtless childhood she had never heard the sad story, but she did wonder, that during the past three years, while she was verging towards womanhood, and the constant companion of her declining mother, that mother's lips should have been on this subject so closely sealed. She diligently searched all the letters contained in both packages, but they threw no more light on the mystery. They had all been written previously to this, and all breathed the same sad strain of sin and suffering, and yet were per-

vaded by the sweetest spirit of Christian submission and penitence. Bessie looked at the date, and read 1832. Eighteen years ago, thought she. Doubtless her heavy burden has long since worn away her strength, and at last she rests quietly in the grave. My mother and her twin sister are once more together in the spirit-world.

She was now too thoroughly excited to think of sleep. She felt wearied and exhausted, but longed for day to dawn, that she might reveal to Mrs. Kennedy the night's disclosures, and, as she was her mother's most intimate friend, she hoped that from her she might possibly gather the full details of what was only darkly hinted at in this singular letter.

Before seeking her bed she went to the window, and drew aside the curtain. The moon was shining brightly, but in the east were the faint but unmistakable gleams of the early dawn. Bessie threw herself on the bed, but tried in vain to sleep. Tumultuous thoughts and busy conjectures whirled rapidly through her brain; and, in her impatient anxiety, she heard with pleasure, first the cock-crowing which an-

nounced the approach of dawn, and then the sounds of awakening life in the household below.

At the summons of the morning bell, she sprang eagerly from her bed, and was the first in the room at family prayers.

CHAPTER III.

"Will the stork, intending rest,
On the billow build his nest?
Will the bee demand his store
From the bleak and bladeless shore?
Man alone, intent to stray,
Ever turns from wisdom's way,
Lays up wealth in foreign land,
Sows the sea and ploughs the sand."
EDWARD MORE.

MRS. KENNEDY watched Bessie with the tenderness and solicitude of a mother. There were many things which conspired to attach her warmly to her young charge. Sympathy with her sorrow, and the fact that she had been entrusted to her by a dying mother, would have been sufficient to enlist her affections; but Mrs. Kennedy loved Bessie chiefly for herself; because there was much in her character that was lovely and attractive. She was, in many respects, the same Bessie of former years—full of ardor and impulse, excitable and affectionate;

but the rushing impetuosity which in childhood sought only present gratification, regardless of consequences, was now under the restraint and guidance of Christian principle, while the warm hearted affectionateness of her nature, which was ever gushing out in caresses upon her mother, Jennie, the bird, and the lamb, was now subdued by religion into a glowing and fervent devotion to her Saviour, and into a more quiet, but none the less sincere, love for her human friends.

Her wandering eye and restless manner immediately attracted Mrs. Kennedy's attention; but she was too well acquainted with Bessie's temperament to be surprised that the last night's employment should have thus excited her. All efforts to draw her into conversation were unavailing, and, silent and abstracted, her thoughts seemed busy with something far away. As soon as breakfast was over, she said:

"Please, Mrs. Kennedy, come to my room at your very earliest convenience. I wish particularly to see you alone for a little while."

"My 'very earliest convenience' would be this minute, Bessie," said Mrs. Kennedy, smiling, "if I did not think that a walk in the

bracing air this morning would be much better for you than a long talk with me in a close room. So, if you will get your bonnet, I will call Willie, and as soon as you return you will find me at your disposal."

"No, Mrs. Kennedy, I want to see and speak to you, not to Willie, this morning."

"Well, then, Bessie, I myself will be your escort, if you prefer my company to Willie's. We will walk down in the grove, and our conversation there will be quite as private as within your own room. Indeed, my dear child," she added, as Bessie shook her head, "you sadly need exercise, and the state of excitement, in which you have been for these past few weeks, has left its impress upon your health and appearance. Remember, my child, that it is not right for you thus to indulge your feelings. It is not thus that a Christian child ought to receive a Father's chastening. He designs that you shall deeply feel your loss, but He does not mean that health, duty, and every thing shall be sacrificed to the indulgence of your sorrow."

"Indeed, my dear Mrs. Kennedy," solemnly

replied the young girl, "I sincerely wish to do what is right, and I do try very hard to bear my bereavement as a Christian child ought to do. Only come with me now, and afterwards I will do any thing, or be any thing, or go anywhere, that you think right."

Mrs. Kennedy said no more, but followed Bessie into her room, and quietly seated herself. Bessie unlocked the cabinet, and, without a word of explanation, placed in Mrs. Kennedy's hands the old and faded letter, and then went to the window which looked out upon the churchyard, as if to subdue her restless impatience by looking at those silent graves, whose quiet sleepers had long since forgotten the anxieties and turmoil of this busy world. Mrs. Kennedy was, from the first, deeply absorbed. She read on hurriedly, breathlessly, to the end, and when she had finished, turned the pages over and over, reading here and there a paragraph as if the letter possessed a fascination which she could not resist.

"What do you think of it?" at last burst forth from Bessie's lips.

"I think," said Mrs. Kennedy, with the deep-

est feeling, "that I have at last heard something, sad though it is, of Jennie Herbert, the gay, thoughtless, but warm-hearted Jennie, the best beloved friend of my early youth."

"Oh! then you knew her!—it is not all a dream," exclaimed Bessie. "Tell me all about her; tell me what was her grievous sin. Why did she go to that far-off country? why did not my mother ever tell me about her? is she living yet? Please, Mrs. Kennedy, tell me all about her."

"Sit down by me, Bessie, and be calm, my child, and I will tell you all I know of your aunt. Whether she is now living or dead, I cannot tell, since, strange as it may seem, I have heard from her only once before in thirty years. All that I can tell you of her, is what she was in the spring-time of her youth, when she was the brightest, happiest being I ever saw.

"The twin sisters, Mary and Jennie Herbert, your mother and aunt, were the only children of your grandfather, and the pride and pets of the village. The hour that made him a father deprived him of his wife, and left him alone and

unassisted to rear two infant daughters. He made it the study of his life to be to those children both father and mother; and though naturally of a refined and delicate organization, yet this constant effort so softened his whole manner and bearing, that it was perfectly wonderful that the stern nature of man could have become so nearly akin to that of the gentler sex. Those children were seldom out of his sight. In his pastoral visits they often accompanied him, in the nurse's arms, before they could walk; and he was frequently heard to say that he could not half preach his sermon, unless in the rector's pew, right in front of him, his eye could rest on those baby faces. Thus these children grew up, the very light of his life, the constant thought of his heart. They were so much alike that no one could distinguish them except the father; but he had so carefully studied their every movement and expression, that he was never at a loss for a moment. They were never sent to school, and yet your own knowledge of your mother will assure you how thoroughly and carefully they were educated. He used to lay his hand affectionately

upon their young heads, as they stood beside him, and laughingly tell them that 'nobody else should ever have the pleasure of teaching them; that his twin rose-buds should not waste their freshness and fragrance upon any body except their old father.'

"Poor old man!" she murmured, "how he was repaid!"

"Go on, go on, Mrs. Kennedy," impatiently implored Bessie.

"I have said," she resumed, "that the sisters were wonderfully alike in appearance, but the resemblance did not extend to the disposition and character. Your mother, though much more impulsive than she was in after life, when she had been severely schooled by affliction, was always gentler than her sister, and more under the influence of religious principle. The first real grief your grandfather ever experienced with them was, when your mother was confirmed, at the age of fourteen, while her sister positively refused to ratify her baptismal vows. It was a sore trouble to their father. He said that it seemed as if a line of separation had been drawn between those two, who ought

to have been, through life, linked together in heart and hand, in principle and action.

“Your aunt was the merriest, most happy hearted being I ever saw. She was devoted to her father and sister, and yet in her thoughtlessness was constantly grieving them. All her faults seemed to originate in an uncontrollable impulsiveness of temperament, which led her to act without a moment’s thought, and then, in the leisure of after hours, sincerely to bewail the evil consequences of her rashness. This very characteristic, unrestrained, was the cause of the fatal step of her life. It was the one great fault of her character; but it was enough to mar its whole beauty, and to wreck her happiness. And yet, with this fault so glaring that every body was aware of it, she was, notwithstanding, universally beloved. Sometimes it assumed so attractive a form, in the outgings of her ardent and affectionate nature, that it seemed rather an ornament than a blemish to her character, and her bright face, her joyous ringing laugh, her cloudless, sunny heart, on which no shadow ever rested, made her a universal favorite.

"As to myself, I loved her passionately. My own quiet, sober spirit never seemed to kindle into any thing like enthusiasm unless fired by contact with hers; and it was only when viewed through the medium of her glowing imagination, that the pathway of life seemed to me to be strewn with flowers.

"It was when the girls were eighteen years old, that two young officers of the army came to spend the summer in our quiet village. Between one of them and your aunt there soon sprang up a violent attachment, characterized by her usual impetuosity. Sprightly and agreeable, he yet seemed too thoughtless and frivolous for your grandfather to be willing to entrust his child's happiness to his keeping; and, gently and affectionately, yet very earnestly, he pleaded that she would pause and think, before she took a step on which depended the happiness of her whole life.

"One evening, when Jennie returned from a walk with this young man, she entered the parlor, where she found her father sitting alone, gazing very intently and absently out of the window. She approached him silently from be-

hind, and laying her hands upon his silvered head, she said—

“‘And what is papa thinking so earnestly about?’

“The old man drew her to him, and seated her on his lap, and, passing his arm lovingly around her waist, said—

“‘I have been thinking, my daughter, upon the vanity and the unsatisfactory nature of even the very best earthly blessings. I have always believed, that if there were any thing here akin to heaven, any thing whose purity had been scarcely sullied by the taint of sin, it was the affections of home; and therefore from the ties which bind my old heart to my precious children, I did expect to realize happiness.’

“He paused an instant, and, as the tears rolled down his cheeks, he added earnestly:

“‘Jennie, I am not selfish in my love for you. God knows that if there is any one thing that I do desire above all others, it is that you may be happy, both here and hereafter; and this assurance I would gladly purchase at any personal sacrifice. It is not because my heart would be sad and my home desolate, that I im-

plore you not to marry this man. You will not, you cannot be happy with him. Never can I consent to commit you to the care of any man who has not the fear of God before his eyes, who does not recognize Him in His providence and reverence His commandments. Take care, oh, take care, my precious child, lest through a life of misery, these words of your father ring like a knell, night and day, in your ears: 'Never, never marry any but a God-fearing man!'

"Jennie was entirely overcome by her father's earnest, solemn tones, and, putting her arms around his neck, she passionately protested that she loved him better than all the world besides, and never would marry any body without his full and hearty approval: and, in the excitement of the moment, she was as sincere in her protestations as he was confiding in her promises.

"Two days afterwards, without one loving word of farewell for father or sister, your aunt left her childhood's home. Not a line could be found to intimate why she left, whither she was going, or whether she would ever return.

“The whole village was electrified. Every body loved your grandfather devotedly, and every body was saddened by his heavy blow, but none felt that they had the right to intrude upon the sacredness of such grief as that, except my mother, who had been Mrs. Herbert’s most intimate friend, and, after her death, the sympathizer in all your grandfather’s troubles, and the counsellor of his children. For three days and nights he sat unmoved in his chair, and seemed turned to stone. He asked no questions, recognized no one, did not even notice his other child, who, with the unselfishness which was always her peculiar characteristic, forgot her own grief in the vain effort to arouse her father.

“At length Sunday morning dawned, and, to the amazement of every one, he left his chair, prepared himself, took his hat and cane, and had actually reached the door before any one could realize what his intentions were. My mother followed him, now thoroughly convinced that what she had feared was indeed true—that his reason was gone. She asked him where he was going: he replied, ‘To church.’ She ex

postulated with him, and represented his physical inability to preach. To this he faintly replied:—

“‘I am not going to preach; I cannot do that; but oh! I want to read that Service. This grief will kill me if it stays pent up in my bosom, and it will be a blessed relief to me to cry,—

“‘That it may please Thee to defend all who are desolate and oppressed, and to hear my people say, with full hearts,—

“‘We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.’

“‘Let me alone. I must go.’

“Never while I live can I forget that Sunday Service; it is more deeply impressed upon my memory than any event of my after life. The church was crowded, not with the idle and curious, but with sincere worshippers, who brought in to the sanctuary that day, as they do on a funeral occasion, hearts melted with sympathy at human grief, as well as hushed into reverence with the thought: ‘The Lord is in his holy temple.’

“Your grandfather came into the chancel, and as the poor old man knelt to implore heavenly

assistance, a suppressed sob here and there throughout the church was the only sound to break the solemn stillness.

“The opening sentences and the exhortation were scarcely audible, and many feared that his strength would give way, and he would have to be borne from the church. But in the Confession, his voice was distinctly heard, and clearly and solemnly came the words of the Declaration of Absolution. Then there was a pause, and presently his voice, feeble and quivering, was again heard: ‘Our Father, who art in heaven;’ but when he came to the petition, ‘Thy will be done,’ it went up to heaven with a piteous wail of mingled agony and submission, that stilled the heart of every body who heard it. Never can I forget it. It rings in my ears this very minute, and it proved to be the cry of a broken heart.

“From that moment there was no trace of deep emotion either in his voice or manner. He read the whole service as he always did, slowly, distinctly, and reverently, and just before the General Thanksgiving, again he paused an instant, as if to nerve himself anew, and then were heard

the words of that touching prayer for persons in affliction:—

“ ‘O merciful God, and heavenly Father, who hast taught us in thy holy Word that Thou dost not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men; look with pity, we beseech Thee, upon the sorrows of thy servants, for whom our prayers are desired. In thy wisdom Thou hast seen fit to visit them with trouble, and to bring distress upon them. Remember them, O Lord, in mercy; sanctify thy fatherly correction to them; endue their souls with patience under their affliction, and with resignation to thy blessed will; comfort them with a sense of thy goodness; lift up thy countenance upon them and give them—give them—’ then with a burst of agony the old man screamed, ‘O, my Father, give them peace.’ ”

“A deep groan, a heavy fall, and the broken hearted father had exchanged his burden of earthly sorrow for that peace which was the last word upon his lips, that ‘peace which passeth all understanding.’ ”

“It might have been expected that a scene of wild confusion and tumult would have fol-

lowed, but it was not so. Hushed and awe-stricken, that congregation silently waited in their places until some of them nearest the chancel hastened to see if life were indeed extinct. And when they found that the pastor whom they loved and revered, who had for twenty years counselled them in difficulties, enlightened their ignorance and comforted their sorrows, was indeed dead, in mournful groups they gathered around the chancel-rail, to take one last farewell look at those familiar and well-beloved features.

“His long silver hair, and his face blanched by sorrow, even before death had left its impress upon it, were sweetly in harmony with the spotless lawn of his priestly vestments, and as he lay in calm repose beneath that altar where he had so long ministered, he was indeed a fitting representation of that peace which he had so earnestly implored.”

Mrs. Kennedy paused, and Bessie exclaimed, with the tears streaming from her eyes:—

“No wonder that my aunt is the victim of such terrible remorse! Well may she remem-

ber 'the grievous sin of her youth.' Go on, Mrs. Kennedy; tell me all."

Mrs. Kennedy resumed:—

"Three days afterwards, your grandfather was buried amid every demonstration of heart-felt sorrow. The solemn words of commitment had just been spoken, and the clods were falling heavily upon his coffin, when, just beyond the dense crowd around the grave, was heard a wild and bitter cry. Frantic with despair, your aunt rushed into the scene. She reached the open grave, and, falling beside it, the tumult of an accusing spirit was for awhile stilled by the oblivion of perfect unconsciousness. For many hours she knew nothing. My mother watched beside her; and I have heard her say that the expression of her countenance, even while thus unconscious, was frightful to behold. When she awoke from her stupor, her beautiful brown hair was blanched as white as silver and her once smooth and sunny brow was ploughed into deep furrows. She asked for her sister. Your mother went into her room, and remained with her several hours, and the next day her husband took her away; and since

then I have never heard her name mentioned but once."

"And what did she say to my mother during that interview?" asked Bessie.

"I do not know," replied Mrs. Kennedy; "I never heard your mother allude to it."

"But did you never ask my mother any thing about her?"

"Only once," said Mrs. Kennedy. "At the birth of your sister, when I asked her what she intended to call her, and she replied, 'Jennie,' I thought I might venture to inquire about her sister; so I said: 'Do you know where your sister is now?'"

"She compressed her lips with an expression of pain, and pressed her hand upon her brow, as she replied with an effort,—

"'It is several years since I have heard from her, and then she was somewhere in the Indian territory of the North-west.'"

"She was silent a few minutes, and then, taking my hand affectionately, said,—

"'Do not think, my dear friend, from my silence upon this subject, that I deem your anxiety to know my sister's fate an intrusive curi-

osity. - You know that I never have recovered from that fearful blow. It has saddened my whole life, and for years I have made it a Christian duty to strive against those terrible memories. I cannot, of course, blot them out. They are burned, as it were, into my very being, and the most I can do is to strive against their so gaining the ascendancy over all other feelings as to make me a clog upon my husband's happiness, and useless to this child which God has mercifully given me. I cannot write to my sister; no tidings from me can reach her. I cannot forget her, and God knows I would not if I could, for the twin play-mate of my childhood, and companion of my youth, is still as dear to me as my own soul. But I desire and try to leave her in the hands of an all-merciful God.'

"Here the conversation dropped, and of course I never again alluded to the friend of my early years. Poor erring child! the revelations of this sad letter are a powerful commentary upon her father's words of warning. Doubtless in her hours of wretchedness and misery, even the depths of the forest have rung with the words which, with prophetic voice, he pronounced in

her ears in the days of her youth and innocence: 'Never, never marry any but a God-fearing man.'"

The story was ended: and, forgetful of every thing except its sad details, Mrs. Kennedy and Bessie were lost in thought. They sat for a long while in unbroken silence, and, at last, Bessie said,—

"I wonder if there is no possible way of finding out if my aunt is still alive. The Indian country of the North-west is not so wild and savage as it was eighteen years ago; and I think that if suitable measures were taken, we might at least discover something of her history."

"No, my child," said Mrs. Kennedy, "it is worse than useless to indulge so vain a hope. The very fact that the Indian country is more accessible to the white man, and intercourse with it so much more practicable than it was when this letter was written, is in itself a proof that your aunt must be dead. If she would write at such length when there was so little probability that the tidings would ever reach your mother, it is not reasonable to suppose that she would now be silent, when she might expect

with certainty that her letter would reach its destination. No: I am certain that she must be dead."

Mrs. Kennedy now left her, and Bessie resumed her search through the cabinet. She found many trifles which association rendered valuable to her; and one compartment was filled with papers, which she immediately recognized as business documents, and which she left undisturbed. She found nothing more that referred to her aunt; but there was an old-fashioned morocco case which contained a coarse painting of an old man, with long gray hair, and a countenance radiant with love and benignity. She ran with her new-found treasure to Mrs. Kennedy, who confirmed her supposition that it was her grandfather; and assured her that it was a perfect likeness. She said that in the days of her childhood she had often seen Jennie take it in both hands and kiss it, and say that next to her father and twin sister, she loved this picture better than any thing in the world.

"Poor Jennie!" sighed Mrs. Kennedy. "How little she dreamed in those days of sunny childhood, that her own act of disobedience would

forever separate her from the old father whom she then loved so well; that she would live to see the time when, in the bitterness of her remorse, she would long to blot out from her memory those features which she then never grew tired of looking upon. I have never seen this miniature since his death."



CHAPTER IV.

“Down, slothful heart! How darest thou say
Call not so oft to pray?

* * * * *

Untired is He in mercy's task;
Then tire not thou to ask.
He says not, 'Yesterday I gave;
Wilt thou for ever crave?'
He every moment waits to give;
Watch thou, unwearied to receive.”

KEBLE.

IN all things pertaining to Bessie's education, Mr. Kennedy endeavored to carry out her mother's designs, and yet, in some instances, he found himself compelled to disregard her known wishes. He knew very well her great objection to sending Bessie to a boarding-school, and yet, after carefully weighing every consideration, he felt obliged to place her in one of these institutions. At first he had determined that she should pursue her studies with him; but a few days' effort had convinced him of the imprac-

ticability of this plan, for the pastoral duties of his growing parish made such constant demands upon his time, that he was even obliged to give up instructing Willie, and had reluctantly determined to send him away to school.

In the selection of a school for Bessie, he had exercised his very best judgment, and had chosen one in the neighborhood of one of our Southern cities, whose pupils never exceeded twenty in number, and who, under the care of a judicious and conscientious minister personally known to himself, would combine with the elements of a thorough education, those Christian privileges, without which all education, however excellent in other respects, must be lamentably deficient.

A little rural church, with its cross-mounted spire and ivy-clad tower, had about it such a home-like, maternal appearance, that, as poor Bessie looked out of the carriage-window upon it, she wiped the tears from her eyes, and her aching heart seemed, for the first time, to realize that she might find at least one spot where she would not be altogether a stranger, where, though surrounded by faces strange and unfa-

miliar, she might yet hear holy words whose every accent breathed of home.

From Mr. Lester, the minister and principal, Mr. Kennedy received a cordial welcome. Room-mates at the Theological Seminary, they had been intimate friends in early youth, had pursued their studies together, were ordained deacons at the same time, and when they had been last together, it was to kneel, side by side, to be admitted to the holy order of the priesthood. From that time, though following the same path of duty, it was in widely different spheres; and although they had never met since, yet a constant correspondence had kept their memories of each other so fresh and vivid, that neither seemed able to realize the change that had taken place in the other. Each was surprised to find that the friend whom he had last seen just entering upon a vigorous manhood, should have climbed the ascent of life, and begun to descend its declivity, and remarked with surprise the silver threads mingling in those locks which he remembered glossy with the rich lustre of youth.

To Mr. Lester's particular care Mr. Kennedy

committed the young girl, enlisting his sympathies by acquainting him with the loneliness of her condition, and begging him, as far as it was in his power, to carry out her mother's designs with reference to her education.

When Mr. Kennedy was gone, alone in the midst of strangers, Bessie felt desolate indeed. The first few days had passed wearily enough. Listless and sad, she took no interest in any of her employments; but Mr. Lester kindly avoided both expostulation and reproof. Satisfied, from Mr. Kennedy's description of her character, that it would not be so long, but that her Christian principle would eventually triumph.

The girls of the school formed a happy family circle, and harmony and good-will seemed universally to prevail. Every day, immediately after breakfast, they were summoned by the bell, into the church, for morning prayers. After this they all exercised in the open air for an hour; then they went into school, and nothing was thought of but lessons until two o'clock, when they were dismissed. Just before sunset they all assembled again in the church, and prayers and praises, and words of

Holy Scripture, were the last sounds which lingered upon the twilight air of the departing day.

Among those bright and happy faces there was one upon which Bessie loved to gaze. Her countenance was radiant as if a sunbeam had been imprisoned in the depths of her laughter-loving eyes; and yet there was so much kindness and gentleness in her manner, that her presence seemed always surrounded by a genial sunshine. Bessie was from the first attracted towards her; but as yet she felt too indifferent and lonely to care to make acquaintances, and, although every young heart was touched by the sight of her sad countenance, yet none felt at liberty to intrude upon the grief of the young stranger.

It was her first Sunday afternoon away from home. In all her hours of loneliness during the past week, she had looked forward to this holy day, and felt that in the Church Service there would be a home tie which would make her forget, for a time, that she was a stranger in a strange land. She thought that in the same worship, at the same hour, in the same

words, she could overleap the abyss of separation, and be at home, at least in heart, during all the Sunday hours. But the result had been very different from her anticipations. Never had her desolation seemed so complete as when, using those familiar words, she looked in vain for the well-known and dearly-loved faces with which those words were so intimately associated. Heart-sick and dispirited, she had wandered, late in the afternoon, into the grove, and her sad thoughts were busy in picturing the little home circle that was then gathered around Mr. Kennedy's fire-side; and she wondered if they were not at that very moment talking of the absent Bessie.

A hand was gently laid upon her shoulder, and a kind voice said:—

“What is the matter, Bessie? You have looked so sad, all day, that I have longed to ask you if you had heard bad news from home; but I was afraid that you might not thank a stranger for her intrusive sympathy.”

“I do thank you, Emma, for your sympathy; for if ever any human being needed it, I do. I have received no bad news from—”

The word "home" died unuttered on her lips, and, checking herself, her eyes filled, and her voice trembled, as she added:—

"I have no home."

"Do you not live with your mother?" rushed to Emma's lips; but before she spoke the words, a glance at Bessie's mourning-dress restrained the impulsive question, and she stopped short without a word.

But Bessie needed no words to interpret Emma's thought, and said:—

"No, Emma: neither home nor mother:—no, nor father, nor brother, nor sister. I am more than an orphan."

"Poor Bessie!" said Emma, "how I do pity you! I did not suppose there was any body in the world so young as you are, who was so utterly friendless. And yet, Bessie, you are not friendless; you may not have relations, but you certainly have friends, for the old gentleman who brought you here seemed to love you as a daughter."

"Yes, Emma, he is very much attached to me, and I have received kindness from him and his family, which I never can repay. His house

has been my—I mean I have lived with them ever since I was obliged to leave my own home.”

“What is his name, Bessie?”

“He is Mr. Kennedy, the rector in the village where I live. He has always been our dear friend as well as pastor. He baptized both my little sister and myself, and buried her, my father, and my mother.”

“Then you once had a sister, Bessie?”

“Yes, Emma; but I can scarcely realize that she was indeed my sister. She was so pure and holy a child, so unlike myself, that it is hard to believe that she was related to me by the ties of flesh and blood; but I always think of her as a little ministering angel, sent to lighten my earthly home with a beam from heaven, and to make me love that holiness of which she was so beautiful an example.”

Emma was awed by the subdued, reverential tone in which Bessie spoke. She felt that she had touched a sacred chord, yet she longed to know more, and asked almost in a whisper,—

“Did she die very young, Bessie?”

“She went to her heavenly home, Emma, when she was only eleven years old.”

Emma Walton was young, bright and happy. In her brief experience of life, the element of sorrow had not mingled, and though possessing even a delicate sensibility, yet she could not at all appreciate the feeling which prompted Bessie to shrink from uttering the word "death," in connection with her sister, and to speak rather of her having gone home. But she only wondered in silence, and, afraid of being intrusive, said no more.

But Bessie was not long silent. She had found a warm, gushing heart, no stranger to sympathy, though it might be to sorrow. Along the electric wire of memory, her thoughts sped back to her early home, and she poured into Emma's eager ear a glowing description of it. She talked earnestly, hurriedly of her mother and sister; and tried by words to picture them to Emma's imagination, but at last, when epithet was exhausted, she exclaimed, as she drew out a morocco case and pressed a spring,—

"There, Emma, is my mother. Look at her in the glory of youth and health. That is the way she looked when Jennie and I were little children. It seems long, long years ago, but

yet I remember well how we used to gaze admiringly upon her soft white brow, her beautiful hair, the delicate bloom upon her cheek, and her eyes—those deep blue eyes, whose expression no artist-pencil could ever transfer to ivory. Such soft, gentle, loving eyes could only be the windows to a heart, the softest, gentlest, most loving, that ever throbbed in a human bosom. Well do I remember, too, how our childish vanity was gratified, as we frequently gave utterance to our belief that no child in school had so beautiful a mother as ours.

Bessie's voice fell into a subdued tone as she added, "My latest recollections of her do not correspond with that picture. Sorrow, sickness, and suffering, silvered her hair, furrowed her brow, and withered the roses upon her cheek, but oh, Emma! nothing could ever dim the lustre of those eyes which, to the very last moment of her life, beamed with a soft, mild radiance, which seemed more akin to Heaven than to earth."

Emma gazed silently and earnestly upon the picture, and, as she handed it back to Bessie, said:—

"It certainly is a most beautiful countenance, yet I have seen one strikingly like it."

"Where?" asked Bessie, incredulously.

"In my own home," replied Emma. "We have a young governess there, who has been with us a year, and taught me until I came here a few months ago. She is wonderfully like this miniature."

"Where is her home, Emma?"

"I do not know. She came from New York to us, and never speaks of her home or family. Father and mother are devoted to her, and so are all of us; for she is very gentle and lovely, and then she is withal so pretty, that a person is involuntarily attracted to her. In the very last letter I received from home, mother was speaking of her, and regretting that with regard to her early associations she is resolutely silent. She says that, notwithstanding she and my father are so warmly attached to her, and do every thing in their power to make our home pleasant to her, yet they are convinced that she is not happy; and, from her silence in regard to her early life, they infer that there is some sorrow connected with it, which has thus

saddened her. Now, my mother is the kindest person in the world, and believes that sympathy is a healer of all kinds of trouble; and it worries and annoys her that Mary will not let her sympathize in her sorrow, whatever it may be."

"What is her name, Emma?"

"Mary Seymour," replied Emma.

"Did you never ask her any thing about her childhood?"

"Oh yes, often," replied Emma. "She always encouraged me to make a companion and friend of her; and at her very first introduction into our family, as if her heart yearned for home ties, she begged that we would not prefix the title 'Miss' to her name, but call her simply, Mary. So Lucy, who is only six, and I, who am sixteen, and brother Charles, who is twenty-one, all of us, call her Mary. I have several times presumed upon the intimacy which she has herself encouraged, and asked her about her childhood and her home; but I have never been able exactly to decide whether my questions excite more sorrow or displeasure. I know, however, that I have never succeeded in ob-

taining any satisfactory information; she has only told me, that she was reared by an aunt, but did not live happily with her, and as soon as she was seventeen years old she left her and became a governess."

"How old is she?" inquired Bessie.

"About nineteen," said Emma. "She had been a governess only one year when she came to us, and she has been in our family just a year."

Just then the clear, ringing tones of the bell sounded the summons to church, and Emma exclaimed, with as much impatience as her amiable disposition ever allowed her to show:—

"There it is again!—the first sound in the morning and the last in the evening! I do get so tired of it. Indeed, Bessie, it is my only objection to the school."

Trained as Bessie had been to regard church privileges as invaluable, she turned upon Emma a face in which surprise and sorrow were so strangely blended, that her new friend burst into a merry laugh as she said:—

"Why, what on earth have I done, Bessie, to make you look at me with so distressed a

countenance? I could almost imagine that I had committed some great crime, or uttered some blasphemous words, from the surprise and horror written upon your face."

"I want you, Emma," said Bessie, very seriously, "to take all that back. Your warm-hearted sympathy has, in one short hour, made me love you dearly, and I cannot bear to hear you speak in that way about going to church."

"Well," replied Emma, still laughing, "if it will make you feel any more comfortable for me to recall my words, I will do so. But indeed, Bessie, I do get very tired of hearing that same service twice every day, and the prayers read out of a book besides. It seems to me so very formal; and I cannot believe that either minister or congregation can enter with much heart into the same old routine, whose very words at last fall with wearisome monotony upon the ear."

"Oh, my dear Emma, do not, I implore you, speak so of God's holy Church, and of a Liturgy in which some of the very purest spirits that ever lived have found words of praise exalted enough for their highest raptures, and penitential confessions contrite enough for their deepest

humiliation. Here we are at the church door; try this evening, dear Emma, to enter into the spirit of these familiar words, and after service is over, come with me and let us talk a little about your objections to these forms of prayer. It pains me to my inmost heart, for anybody I love to speak so of the Church: I imagine that I feel precisely as I should if any one could have the heart to speak disparagingly to me of my sainted mother."

Strangely did Bessie's words fall upon Emma's ear, and all through the service she pondered, in silent wonder, upon the strange enthusiasm which could make a young girl regard a church with something of the same respect and affection that she felt for her mother. But she could not understand it, and at last accounted for it upon the supposition, that with a warm impulsive temperament, Bessie's yearning affections when her mother was taken from her, had gone out after something around which to entwine, and in the fervor of a religious enthusiasm not yet subsided, she had fastened them upon the Church in which that mother had lived and died.

But however strongly convinced she was that

Bessie's attachment to her Church and its services would not outlast the freshness of her grief, she was equally assured that for the present, at least, it was sincere, for she could not listen to her young companion's deep, earnest tones, as she engaged in the service, without being fully persuaded of her sincerity; and when it was all over, and Bessie still lingered upon her knees, Emma gazed upon her with a feeling of awe and admiration which she had never before felt for a religious worshipper.

Silently and reverently they left the church, and walked a little distance without a word being spoken.

At last Bessie said:—

“Did the words sound, this evening, as formal and unmeaning as ever, Emma?”

“I scarcely know, Bessie; for to tell you the truth, I was so completely absorbed thinking about the last remark you made as we entered the door, that I could not attend to what was going on.”

“And what was that, Emma?”

“That it pained you as much to hear the Church disparaged, as you imagine it would to

hear your sainted mother spoken of with disrespect. Do you mean me to understand, Bessie, that you regard your Church as a kind of mother?"

"No; not a kind of mother, Emma, but a real, tender, affectionate mother, who, with all a mother's unwearied love, began with a thanksgiving at my birth, and has followed me, in infancy, with Baptismal privileges, in childhood, with the holy teachings of her Catechism, in youth, with Confirmation vows, and will follow me in maturity with holy Sacraments; who will go with me to the marriage altar, and will follow me, with the gentlest and most loving words, to the chamber of sickness and suffering; who will send up to heaven the most fervent of petitions when I am breathing out my life, and will then, with sad and solemn words, reverently lay my body in the grave to await the resurrection morning. Oh Emma! none but a mother ever could thus follow a child through every circumstance and condition of life, and surely that Church deserves to be so called, which watches over us from the cradle to the grave, on the land and the sea, in the sanctuary and in the sick and dying chamber,

in the gorgeous cathedral and the dark and narrow cell of the lonely prisoner. Yes, the Church is a precious mother, and I thank God, that while I am under her maternal guidance, I cannot be altogether an orphan.

Emma was amazed. Bessie spoke too seriously and quietly, and feelingly, to be uttering a rhapsody; and yet her friend was so bewildered that she almost doubted whether indeed she heard aright. Bessie's words had opened to her an entirely new vein of thought. She had always been accustomed to regard Church ordinances as so many disagreeable restrictions, and looked upon the whole system of Church worship rather as a formal and prescribed method of passing away Sunday, than as something which is to go with us into the week, and follow us into all situations of life.

At first she said nothing in reply, and seemed lost in thought; but in a little while she answered:—

“I wish, Bessie, that I could feel as you do, with regard to some church; but every thing in religion and in the Church seems to me so intangible, so abstruse, so unreal—deep meta-

physical doctrine that I cannot understand, and services which, in your mode of worship, seem all formalism, and in others all excitement, or all cold, dull uniformity. I wish I could look with your eyes upon the Episcopal Service; at least," she added, with an affected carelessness, "while I stay here; for, as I am obliged to hear it, I would of course prefer to be interested in it. But oh, that tedious routine of the same prayers, the same chants, even the same subjects to be treated of in the pulpit at stated times! Now, Bessie, speak the honest truth: do you not in your heart sometimes get tired of it?"

"Emma, when do you expect to go home again?"

"Well," replied Emma, "that is quite foreign to the subject; but I will grant to your question a more direct reply than you have given mine. I am going to spend my Christmas holidays at home; and I intend, moreover, if you will consent to the arrangement, to carry my new-made friend Bessie Melville along. But why do you ask?"

"I want to know, Emma, which would be

more agreeable to you, when you drive up to your house, to have your own dear mother rush out to welcome you, with the same well-known loving face, the same familiar voice, the same warm clasping embrace, to which you have been accustomed from a child, the same old but endearing epithet, 'my daughter,' the same cordial old welcome to the same old home; or, to have a stranger come to meet you with unfamiliar voice, aspect and manner;—which, Emma, would be more agreeable to you?"

"Why, what a question, Bessie!" replied Emma, laughing. Who would not rather see her own dear old mother than any body else in the world?"

"And do you never grow tired of the same old home, Emma? I should think the same faces, the same house, the same flowers, the same trees would become very monotonous to you."

"Why, how silly, Bessie, to talk so! Do you not know that all these things acquire a sort of sacredness in my estimation just because they are familiar? I love them all the more because their recollection goes with me as far back as my earliest consciousness."

“Well, Emma, that is all I wish to know. Your own words are the best answer to the question you have just asked me. You have yourself declared that in the purest and holiest affections of our nature we do not desire novelties. The same old home, the same old friends, must ever be the dearest. Now, carry this feeling into our religion. God has given us but one revelation, and we must study, day by day and year by year, its very same old words; and the higher we advance in the Christian life, and the nearer we approach the atmosphere of Heaven, the dearer do these words become, and the more we should deprecate any change in them. And in that revelation, when our Saviour would seem most attractive to us, when He would, in one single word, embody all those characteristics which will make us love Him more and cling more closely to Him, He inspires his apostle to represent Him as ‘Jesus Christ, *the same* yesterday, to-day, and forever;’ no alteration of purpose, no change of feeling, but the same tender, gentle, loving Saviour who, in the days of his humanity, wept over sinners and prayed for his murderers. And the Saviour’s Church,

following his example, and manifesting the same consideration for this longing of the human heart, has provided us with an unalterable Liturgy; and this, like the Bible, can no more weary or satiate the true Christian than can the atmosphere he breathes or the friends he loves. I go to church always to worship the same God. The wants of my soul and body are generally the same, the common mercies of daily life are the same; therefore, I must, in substance at least, if not in words, ask for the same things and offer the same thanksgivings; and for precisely the same reason that you prefer your old home, do I prefer my old service; because its words are associated with my earliest and most sacred memories; because I do not remember the time when they were not familiar to my ears, and revered by my heart before I knew their meaning any farther than this, that they were holy words, by which my mother told me I might talk to my Father in Heaven."

"There is something in that, I confess, Bessie," replied Emma, after a few moments' thought; "I never viewed it in that light before. But, suppose, as is the case with myself, that none

of the recollections of childhood were interwoven with this service ; that it had not been familiar to you from infancy, what then ? Do you think that you would love it so much ?”

“I dare say, Emma, that at first I should not ; but it seems to me that the more familiar I became with it the more I should value it. That perfect adaptation to every circumstance and condition of our life, which is so remarkable a characteristic of the Prayer Book, would, I think, very soon be perceptible to me ; and the fact that there is no want of our being which is not prayed for, and no mercy which is not gratefully acknowledged in a thanksgiving, would alone be sufficient to open my eyes to its priceless value. I think it quite probable that it would take me some time to find this out, for the Prayer Book, like the Bible, requires to be studied. Like God’s own Word, to which it so scrupulously adheres, and from which a very large portion of its contents is a copy, it has a depth of meaning which the careless reader will never fathom, but which the true-hearted, earnest-minded Christian, illiterate though he may be, will not fail to dis-

cover. Emma, my mother used to say that her Bible and Prayer Book needed the unclouded light of Heaven, and the undimmed intellect of the disembodied soul for all their wealth of beauty to be unfolded and appropriated."

Bessie paused a moment, and then added, reverently, "And the unfolding of those beauties she is now enjoying in the Paradise of God, with that Saviour for her teacher, to whom, having not seen, she so lovingly clung even while yet absent from Him."

Unconsciously the girls had wandered on while engaged in their conversation, and the shades of evening had gathered around them, and the chill autumn air warned them to return home. They retraced their steps to the school without a word, Emma pondering the strange things which she had heard, and which were but dimly comprehended by her, and Bessie thinking of that pure and sainted mother who was so vividly brought before her mind as she uttered these last words.

CHAPTER V.

One Ark

Of old rescued the Patriarch's house.
But now while men are warned to escape
The floods of wrath, they stop to ask
Which Ark is safest? Tell me which
Will surest breast the waves? Lo! while they wait
The deluge comes and overwhelms them all.

EMMA WALTON, though a gay-hearted, happy girl, was not a thoughtless one, and yet it was a matter of wonder to herself that Bessie's words had made such an impression upon her mind. For the next two or three days she found herself involuntarily recalling first one thing, and then another, that had been said in their Sunday-evening conversation, and she was surprised to find how vividly it was all impressed upon her memory. Her acquaintance with the Prayer Book did not extend beyond the ability to follow through the prescribed morning and evening service, and even in these she frequently found herself at a loss where to find the Collect, Epis-

tle and Gospel for the day. She had only been a few months at the school, so that usage had as yet scarcely familiarized her with the service, and it had never occurred to her that it was at all worth while to look into the contents of the Prayer Book, out of church. She regarded it merely as a volume containing the formal mode of public worship, and thought that, beyond the limits of the sanctuary, it was useless.

But she had found that thus it did not seem to every one. A young girl not older than herself had learned somewhere, and by some means, to place a very different estimate upon it, and spoke of it, too, as if she were thoroughly acquainted with its teachings.

Two or three days had passed away. With that strange dislike which all persons, especially the young, seem to feel to its being suspected that they are interested in religious truths or services, Emma would not go again to Bessie to learn any thing or ask any guidance, but, alone and unassisted, she determined to look into the Prayer Book for herself, and see if she, too, could not learn some of its wonders, and see some of its beauties.

She was sitting on the grass in the grove, turning over the leaves. Too curious to see all, she could not take time to do more than glance at a few lines of each of its offices; and yet even such a hasty survey as this, seemed to give her a glimmering idea of what Bessie meant, when she called the Church a mother, who watched over her children from the cradle to the grave. The very headings of the offices told her this; and as she read: "Baptism of Infants," "Catechism," "Confirmation," "Solemnization of Matrimony," "Visitation of the Sick," "Communion of the Sick," "Burial of the Dead," "Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea," "Visitation of Prisoners," she thought—

"This, then, is what Bessie meant by saying that the Church follows us with her teachings and privileges, in infancy, childhood, youth, and maturity, on the land and the sea, in sickness and in health, in the sanctuary and in the prisoner's cell. Really there is truth in what she said; it does seem something like a mother following her child all through life, and never leaving it under any circumstances, until she has seen the grave close over it."

"What are you doing here by yourself, Emma?" said Bessie's voice, as she approached from behind.

A slight blush mantled on Emma's cheek, as she felt almost sorry that Bessie had come upon her while in the act of studying the Prayer Book; for such is the contrariety of our nature, that, even while she had actually longed for days for some accident to cause Bessie to renew the theme of the preceding Sunday, yet, now that the opportunity had offered, she felt ashamed that Bessie should discover that she had ever bestowed a moment's thought upon that conversation.

Bessie's face glowed with pleasure as she recognized in her friend's hand, not the new, handsome Prayer Book with which Emma had provided herself as part of her equipment for the Episcopal school, but the little old, well-worn, but sacred book, which, in by-gone years, had always found a place in her mother's work-basket; and from whose well-studied pages that mother had expounded its teachings to herself and her child-sister.

She walked up close to Emma, and passing

her arm around her waist, her eyes filled, as she took the book from Emma's hand, and opened where it was written :—

“MARY HERBERT.

FROM

HER OLD FATHER.”

“I love you very dearly, Emma,” she said. “If I did not, I could not without pain see you use that precious little book. I have in my trunk a Bible bound like it, which was given to my mother by her father at the same time with this. I believe, Emma, that one of the first things I remember is, of being a very little child when my mother one day took me in her lap, and, holding this book in one hand, she laid the other upon my head, and repeated some words over me, which I of course did not understand; but the earnestness and solemnity of her manner made such a deep impression, that I never forgot it. Years afterward I reminded her of the incident, and she showed me, in this book, the blessing which she then implored upon my infant head. Here it is.”

Emma read:—

“The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace, both now and evermore. Amen.”

“It is indeed a most beautiful and comprehensive blessing,” said Emma, “and interwoven, too, into the office for the visitation of the sick.”

“Yes, Emma, the Church, like a tender mother, ever reserves her most loving words, and fullest blessings, and gentlest offices, for her sick child. There is nothing in that Prayer Book more beautiful than this same Visitation Office.”

“I see, Bessie, that you still cling to what seemed to me, at first, the strange notion of calling your Church a mother. I believe I begin rather to like it; but I should have to be very well assured that a Church is right in doctrine, discipline, and mode of worship, before I could ever feel for it that affection, and submission, and trust, which are all implied in the word mother. And this has always been a stumbling-block in the way of my going into any Church. I may seem to you, Bessie, thoughtless and friv-

alous, but I have had, and still have, at times, a sincere desire to be a Christian; and in reading of our Saviour's pure and sinless life, even if there were no heaven to reach, and no hell to shun, I think I would, of all things in the world, desire to be like Him in gentleness and holiness. Sometimes my heart is completely melted and subdued at the thought of all He has done for me, and I long to do something to show that I am neither unmindful of, nor ungrateful for, the salvation He has purchased for me; and when I express this desire I am told that the only way to confess Christ before men is to join some church. I ask 'what church?' for I find them all around me, of every form of doctrine and mode of worship. Some tell me, 'Of course I must join the church in which I have been reared;' others point to another and say, 'This is the way, walk thou in it;' and others, yet again, tell me that 'One is as good as another, for they all lead to Heaven, and after you reach there, it will make but little difference by what road you came.' Now, Bessie, this has been a difficulty in my way more than once. I am yet scarcely more than a child, and know noth-

ing of doctrines and theories. I am not wise enough to decide between all these conflicting opinions; and, bewildered by them, and afraid of doing wrong, I have concluded to do nothing in the way of public profession, but quietly to read my Bible, and love my Saviour, and strive to be like Him. But after a while these impressions wear off, and I begin to be careless again, and then I feel thankful that I did not join any church, because I find out that I have never been a real Christian. Your words the other day about regarding the Church as a mother, at first amazed me, and then, I will acknowledge it, amused me; and, lastly, excited in me a desire to have the same feelings towards some church, though, to speak candidly, I do not now think it would be the Episcopal. I need some guide, for, beyond a love for the Saviour and a desire to be like Him, all seems abstruse and dark, and, as I told you the other day, intangible. I want something that I can take hold of, something real, which I can love and reverence; and the more I think of it, the more I feel that it is precisely a mother that I want—a Church whose authority to teach I can-

not question, one in which I can trust implicitly, and to whose teachings I can render unquestioning obedience. But how to begin the search, among all these divisions and dissensions, I do not know. Even if I live to old age, and am learned enough, and have time enough to devote to the investigation, it will be a life-long work to discover which is the right one, or which nearest right; and I am afraid that all these feelings which you have been the means of again awakening in my heart, will die away, as the others have done before, without producing any results."

"I sincerely trust not, Emma," replied Bessie; "but how to counsel you in your difficulty, I have no idea, for with all such doubts and fears I am totally unacquainted. I have never known but one way. The very first act of my mother after my birth, was to make me, by holy baptism, a member of the Church of Christ; and from the earliest dawn of my intellect, she strove to impress me with the belief, not that I was to be at some indefinite future period a member of the Church, but that I was then, and never could be any thing else, and that I

was bound by solemn vows to be first a Christian child, and then a Christian woman. And most faithfully, Emma, did my mother fulfil the promises which she made at my baptism, and earnestly did she, as she promised then to do, 'instruct me in all things which a Christian ought to know and believe.' With my gradually expanding intellect she explained to me as I was able to understand them, the standards of that Church to which she was so ardently attached. She did not wait till I was old enough to choose a church for myself, any more than she waited until I was grown so as to let me decide whether or not I would choose to be educated; but patiently and untiringly did she study with me that Prayer Book which she so much valued; and showed me, step by step, how in its minutest teachings and details, it had followed with such wonderful particularity the holy Word of God. And you can form no idea how it enhances to me the pleasure of reading both Bible and Prayer Book, to note the correspondencies which she has pointed out to me when a child, and which seem daily more remark

able, just in proportion to the strengthening and expanding of my mind.

“The holy little sister that I have told you of, never wearied of these instructions; and my mother accounted it one of the greatest privileges of her life, that she had been permitted to unfold the beauties of the Prayer Book to a childish mind which so eagerly enjoyed them; but I was not so docile, not so in love with holy things, and when I sometimes grew restive under the restraint, she would gently say: ‘You will live to see the day, my daughter, when you will gratefully remember your mother for all these instructions, and when it will be to you an unspeakable pleasure, to trace the wonderful agreement of the Prayer Book with the Bible.’ I used then to think that she might be mistaken, but I have since learned that she was right, although never, until I was left as it were to my own guidance, could I fully realize the value of the precious legacy which she has left me in the absolute conviction, founded not upon the hearsay of others, but upon my own knowledge, that the Church in whose fold my mother placed me in my infancy, is the Church of

Christ, founded literally 'upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone,' following the Bible in teachings, sacraments, and worship, and, withal, so interweaving the truths, and precepts, and consolations of our holy religion into our every-day life, that, as I have shown you before, they go with us into every circumstance and condition."

"But, Bessie, may not these other churches be equally right, equally in accordance with the Word of God?"

"With that, Emma, I have nothing to do. I know that ours is the good old Church which our Anglo-Saxon fathers brought with them to this new world; a holy Church in all her words and ways, and the mother of many holy children. She is always reading the Bible to us, and professes to teach the same doctrines and in the same words which the early Christians believed." And Bessie went on to explain to Emma that very little of the Prayer Book is new; that it was made up of the old liturgies which were in use many centuries ago, and that, while the Church teaches many things, she requires us, in order to become members, to be-

lieve the plain, simple things which stand out upon the face of Scripture."

"But, suppose you were to find out the Church is wrong, what would you do then?"

"Indeed, indeed I don't know. Have you ever settled, Emma, what you intend to do when your father and mother are sent to the penitentiary?"

Emma's face flushed for a moment; but the absurdity of the suggestion overcame her, and she laughed heartily at the imagined parental downfall.

"Do not think," continued Bessie, "that I look down upon other people. My mother used to tell me that there were many people better than she was, who belonged to various denominations. She said we ought to love goodness wherever we found it, and treat every body's religion with respect.

"But then she said, that we ought to be afraid of experiments in religion, even when they were made with a good design; that if there was an old, well-trodden way, we had better keep to it, although wise men might say they had found a nearer road; and, Emma,

from what little I know, it does seem as if there was nothing settled and quiet, except in the Church; outside of it they are always changing and dividing. But I know too little about these things to discuss them."

"Well, Bessie, I would give all the world for just such an assurance as this. All agree in telling me, that 'I ought to join some church—I cannot be a Christian without it;' but when I ask, in dismay: 'Which?' then each one points me to a different one. Now, if I could only be satisfied for myself, I would so gladly seek shelter, under a mother's protecting care and guidance; for my own experience tells me, that in this they all speak the truth; it is necessary to join some one. Will you not help me, Bessie, to decide, if I set about the work in good earnest? If I know my own heart, I do desire to be a Christian. I know that I love and reverence the Saviour; and I do intend to try and do his will, and to be like Him. Must I wait for any thing else before I join the Church?"

"You will not feel hurt, Emma, if I ask you please not to say, 'join the Church.' Every-

body, I know, uses the phrase; but you will not find it in the Prayer Book; and in the Bible it is said, 'The Lord added to the Church. We speak of 'joining' human societies; and the word seems to imply, that we expect to help them on by giving them the weight of our influence and example. I would prefer to say, 'go into the Church,' as this phrase seems rather to express a sense of need and a desire for shelter.

"As to waiting for any other feelings before going into the Church, the Saviour has recognized no other as necessary, except sorrow for sin, and, by his help, a full purpose of amendment; and the Church, following closely in his footsteps, receives to the Holy Communion, which is her mode of admission into full and complete membership, all those 'who truly and earnestly repent of their sins, are in love and charity with their neighbors, and intend to lead a new life.' It must be necessary to be in the Church, in order to be a Christian, because it is there alone that the Holy Communion is administered; and it is our Saviour's dying command, 'to do this in remembrance of Him;' and the

Church re-echoes his words: 'As the Son of God did vouchsafe to yield up his soul, by death upon the cross for your salvation, so it is your duty to receive the Communion in remembrance of the sacrifice of his death, as He himself hath commanded: which if ye shall neglect to do, consider with yourselves how great is your ingratitude to God, and how sore punishment hangeth over your heads for the same; when ye wilfully abstain from the Lord's table, and separate from your brethren, who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food.'

"With regard to helping you, Emma, I would be very glad to do any thing by way of assisting and encouraging you to be a Christian; but as to choosing a church for you, that is a responsibility which I dare not assume. As I told you before, I know no church but my own; to attempt to lead you by any other road, would emphatically be 'the blind leading the blind;' and you do not seem to think that you could ever learn to love the church of my affections and confidence. But we can, at least, study the Bible together. We both acknowl-

edge that to be our standard of action, and the Saviour whom it reveals to be our Lord and God. Here there can be no diversity of opinion, and for the present we can leave all other points alone, and only try to 'learn of Him to be meek and lowly in heart.'"

Emma's countenance wore a shade of disappointment. She was silent an instant, and then replied :

"I thought, Bessie, that from the enthusiastic love you seemed to bear that mother Church, nothing would delight you half so much as to win for her the affections and confidence of another daughter; but yet, when I ask you to do this, you rather refuse my request."

"Not at all, my dearest Emma," said Bessie. "I cannot tell you how much it would delight me to see you a devoted Church-woman, and to be instrumental in leading you into those green pastures, I should regard as one of the greatest privileges of my whole life. But, after all, Emma, I am, as you say of yourself, scarcely more than a child. I know nothing except what my mother taught me; and it may be that even her teachings, though right in themselves, were

imperfectly comprehended or misconstrued by my young mind. It would be so much safer for you to seek a more competent guide. Why not go to Mr. Lester? He is a minister, and it is his business and pleasure to enlighten the ignorant and guide the wandering."

"No, Bessie, not yet. My purposes are so unformed that I could not explain to him all I want. I have known him longer, it is true; but he is, after all, more of a stranger to me than you are. I can pour out my feelings to you, and expose my ignorance to you with less restraint than to any body else, and if you will not teach me, I shall not go to any one to help me."

"Well, my dear Emma, it will give me very great pleasure to go over with you all the teachings of my childhood. I had line upon line, and precept upon precept, and do not think that I have forgotten any thing; at least, the different offices of the Prayer Book will at once recall my mother's explanations, as I understood them.

We will begin and go regularly through the Prayer Book, and try and note, as my mother

pointed out to me, its beautiful correspondence with the Bible."

"I think, Bessie, that I shall like it very much. The headings of all these—'offices' I believe you called them—attracted my attention, especially those for the sick and for prisoners. It seems so careful and considerate to provide services for the lonely and the suffering."

"I think, Emma," said Bessie, smiling, "that you already begin to appreciate the propriety of the name—'mother.' You have used the proper term. The Church, like her blessed Lord, is always 'careful and considerate' towards our necessities and infirmities, and in this respect resembles nothing earthly so much as a patient, gentle, loving mother."

They were silent for a few moments, and then Bessie spoke.

"But tell me, Emma, how you came by my little Prayer Book, and what was your fancy for taking that instead of your own handsome one? I feel that its shabby and unsightly appearance throws a safe-guard around it, and hence I always keep it lying on my table

among my other books, with an apparent indifference to it which is very far from real, for I assure you, that there are few things in the world that I value so much."

"I went into your room, Bessie, to see you, and I saw lying on the table this same old book, which I have noticed with surprise you always carry to church. I concluded that there must be some reason why you thus valued it, and you may think it was an impertinent curiosity which tempted me to look into it; and I read what I immediately conjectured was your mother's maiden name. I had just taken up my own Prayer Book to look into its contents, for what you had said about it the other day interested me, and I determined to see for myself what it was that had awakened in your heart such enthusiastic attachment. I exchanged my new book for your well-worn and well-used one, why, I can scarcely tell, except that it looked like an old friend, and in reading it, I would not feel so much like a stranger exploring an unknown region, but would see along every step of the way the foot-prints of some one who had trodden that path before. I hope,

Bessie, that you will excuse the liberty I have taken. I supposed that your little book was valuable, but I did not realize that it was so great a treasure, or I would have left it undisturbed."

"Make no apologies, Emma. It gives me the sincerest pleasure to see it in your hands, and if any thing could enhance its value, it would be to see it the means of teaching and guiding, besides my mother, my sister and myself, the friend whom I have learned in so short a time to love so well."

CHAPTER VI.

"This is my own adopted child,
Nurse thou him well for me;
Restore him harmless, undefiled,
Vast thy reward shall be.
That he may worthy prove to be mine heir
Thou must *take care!* TAKE CARE!"

AUTUMN gradually merged into winter, and the first week in December had not passed away before happy young hearts began to throb with pleasure, and cheerful young voices to discuss with eagerness, the expected return to their homes at Christmas. To her visit to Emma's home, Bessie looked forward with anticipations of pleasure which were unaccountable to herself. Since her mother's death strange faces had been peculiarly painful to her, and she shrank from all intercourse, except with a few of her most familiar friends; but now she found herself, almost without any volition of her own, not only pledged to go into the midst of strangers,

but even expecting to enjoy their society. The truth was, that Bessie had become exceedingly interested in Emma Walton, and longed to know, not only more of herself, but something also of her home. There was in the young girl's character so much truthfulness, so much earnestness of purpose in her new employment of studying together the Scriptures and the Prayer Book, such a confiding willingness to tell Bessie all her difficulties and expose to her all her ignorance, that Bessie could not but love and admire her; and then there was such a bright sun-light of happiness ever emanating from her unclouded heart, that Bessie's saddened spirit was, unconsciously to herself, warmed and lighted by the genial glow. The intercourse of these two new friends, like the light and shadow of a picture, enhanced the beauty of the character of each; the buoyancy of the one was restrained from becoming levity, and the sadness of the other from degenerating into despondency.

Never had Bessie so fully realized the value of her mother's patient and oft-repeated instructions, as since she had herself become a teacher. Nor was it the least pleasant part of her em-

ployment, that, day after day, she saw new reason to thank her God, that He had granted to her ignorant childhood such a mother. It had only required a very few days thoroughly to arouse Emma's interest in her new pursuit, and Bessie watched with delight the effect produced upon her mind by the unfolding of the teachings of the Prayer Book. And yet while she enjoyed it, she could not altogether comprehend it. Herself instructed from early infancy in Church teachings, she could not enter into the feelings or appreciate the surprise of one who had grown up without them, and when she would point out in each and all the offices of the Prayer Book that careful following of the letter and spirit of the Scriptures which everywhere abounds, and which she looked upon as a matter of course, she could not understand the delighted astonishment of her friend.

It had now grown too cold for them to pursue their study in the grove, and so every afternoon, as soon as school was dismissed, they went immediately into Bessie's room, and with Bible in one hand, and Prayer Book in the other, would compare the two. Bessie had passed

over the same ground so often before, that she could, without hesitation, turn to almost all the references upon which any doctrine or custom of the Church was founded; but whenever she was at fault, a little marginal note upon the page, in her mother's hand-writing would at once direct her. Sometimes they became so much interested, that they forgot the walk, which was one of their school duties, and the church-bell calling them to sunset prayers, first recalled them to a sense of how much time they had consumed.

They spent one afternoon studying the Baptistal Office, but were summoned to church before they had finished it, and that night, just before going to bed, while Bessie was indulging in a little reverie as she gazed upon the glowing embers, a hurried tap at her door was followed instantly by the entrance of Emma, with a candle in one hand and her Prayer Book in the other.

"O, Bessie!" she exclaimed, "I have found something in the Prayer Book which I do not like, and I am so sorry. Every thing else has seemed not only in accordance with the Bible,

but even I myself, young and ignorant as I am, could see the fitness and propriety of every thing, as far as I have gone, and I began to love the book so much, that it really distressed me to see this. Surely, Bessie, you never could have noticed this injunction."

Bessie smiled as she replied:—

"Yes, Emma, if it is there, I am sure that I have seen it. But do not be alarmed. I am glad to see that thus far the Prayer Book has so commended itself to your judgment and affections, that the idea of being obliged to abandon it pains and distresses you. What is the difficulty?"

"This is it," replied Emma, as she handed Bessie the book, while on her countenance there was a mingled expression of consternation and sorrow.

Bessie read:—

"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose."

"O, Bessie! you never saw this before, did you?"

"Yes, Emma; very, very often."

"Well, Bessie, what does it mean? Did you not tell me that Confirmation admits a person to all the privileges of the Church, Holy Communion and all?"

"Yes, Emma, I told you so."

"And yet, Bessie, do you, can you believe that every body who can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, is ready for Confirmation, and therefore for Communion?"

"No, Emma; not by any means."

"Why, Bessie, it says so here: read it for yourself."

"No, Emma, I need not read it, for I have known it by heart these many years. Do you read it again; it may be that you have not read it aright."

Emma looked at the formidable sentence with earnest attention, and then mournfully shook her head as if her last hope was gone, and she would be compelled to surrender a

book which contained such monstrous teachings.

"Read it aloud, Emma; let me hear what it says."

Emma read:—

"Ye are to take care—"

"That will do for the present," said Bessie, interrupting her; "let us talk about that direction first. 'Ye are to take care.' This, Emma, is the last instruction, which lingers like a note of warning in the ears of those who have made such solemn vows in the name of the child. The Church dismisses them with a voice of admonition, 'Ye are to take care:' as much as to say, 'if ye *do* take care, and faithfully fulfil the promises you have now made, this child will, most probably, be ready for Confirmation so soon as he is old enough to say understandingly the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.' Do not forget that last clause, Emma; it means a great deal. 'Is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism.' The next thing we shall

study will be this very Church Catechism, and I think you will agree with me in believing that, whenever a child or a grown person 'is sufficiently instructed in that,' to believe and to do all that it requires, he will be a Christian in the fullest sense of the word, and entitled to all the privileges of Church membership."

"Yes, Bessie, I believe this; but how can any one dare to promise for another that he will be all that the Catechism requires, so soon as he can say understandingly the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments?"

"They can dare to promise this, Emma, quite as well as they can dare to promise that the unconscious infant shall 'renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of the world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and that he shall continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.' They cannot and dare not promise either without God's help; and with his assistance it is as easy to do one as the other."

"Do you say, Bessie, that the Church means to teach in this place, that if parents and sponsors do their duty, the child will probably be

religious so soon as he is old enough to understand what a Christian ought to do and believe?"

"Yes, Emma, that is what my mother told me the Church teaches; not in every individual case without exception, but in such a large majority of cases, that it may be laid down as a general rule. Our Saviour Christ, in suffering the little children to come, does not promise to bless them at some indefinite time, and on some unknown conditions; but blesses them then and there, and upon conditions which those who bring them are fully able to understand and fulfil. And if those sponsors 'take care,' (to use a mother's voice of affectionate admonition,) to fulfil their promises, and diligently, and patiently, and with prayer, teach these baptized children 'all those things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health;' or if, in the words of the Bible, instead of the Prayer Book, they 'train up a child in the way he should go,' surely you will believe God himself when He tells you that 'when he is old he shall not depart from it?' Yes, Emma, in the baptismal covenant an agreement is made

on the part of the Saviour and on the part of the child. You do not need the assurance of the Prayer Book to make you believe that this promise 'He, for his part, will most surely keep and perform.' He promises to the child all spiritual blessings while on earth, and finally the kingdom of heaven, on certain conditions, which the sponsors undertake to fulfil. The Bible tells us, that our Saviour 'cannot deny himself;' and so it must be that if the child never receives the promised blessings, the forfeiture must rest somewhere else than upon Him 'who cannot lie.' Now, if the sponsors would 'surely keep and perform' their vows, as the Saviour keeps his, do you see how the child could help being religious, so soon as he is old enough to understand Christian obligations? The Saviour promises; the sponsor promises. Now, if both are faithful, must not the result surely follow? Now, as the Saviour cannot fail on his part, is it strange, when so much depends upon the sponsor, a frail human being surrounded by temptation and compassed with infirmity, is it strange that the Church's last words, as she sends him away,

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should be: 'Take care. Such fearful results will follow unfaithfulness, such vital interests depend upon you, you have promised so much; take care, oh my child, take care!' Is it strange, Emma?"

But Emma did not answer; and presently she said, as if thinking aloud:—

"What a mother, Bessie, you must have had, thus to explain to you all difficulties, and make you understand all these things, so intricate to those who read them for the first time. God has granted me a very great blessing in sending you to this school to teach me. Others might have explained this passage to me a long while, and yet I doubt if I should ever have fully believed, unless I had seen and known you, that if sponsors 'take care,' as the Church teaches, the baptized children will almost certainly become religious."

"And why, Emma," asked Bessie, in surprise, "will you be more willing to believe it, since you have seen and known me?"

"Because," she replied earnestly, "all that you have told me of your mother, and all that you have taught me, go to prove that she made

this experiment fully and fairly. I believe she did faithfully fulfil all the promises that she made for her children when they were baptized, and see the result. Did you not tell me that your little sister had been confirmed, and had received the Communion, young as she was?"

"Yes, Emma. The Church, except in very remarkable instances of piety, prefers not to admit children to Confirmation and Communion until they are fourteen years of age, because they are not generally capable of understanding the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and the other parts of the Church Catechism, until they reach at least that age. But so clear were my little sister's views of religious duty, and so lovely her Christian character, that she was admitted to all the privileges of the Church when only eleven years old."

"It is just as I said," replied Emma, thoughtfully. "Your mother 'took care.' She obeyed the Church's warning; and the result in her case is a powerful commentary upon what you have taught me to-night. One child was brought to the Bishop to be confirmed at eleven, the

other at fourteen. Yes, Bessie, I believe it, and I thank you for this more than for all your other teachings. I confess it: when I glanced at this passage I was amazed; yes, I was more; I was horrified that a Church could teach the monstrous doctrine that every child who could say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, is ready for Confirmation. I thought you surely never could have seen this passage, and between distress, surprise, and horror, I felt that I could not sleep until I had asked you about it. And now, in such a different light does it appear, since I have your mother's interpretation of it; that I would not, for any thing, have it expunged from the Prayer Book. It is so solemn, and, withal, so affectionate an appeal, so like a mother, afraid lest a wayward child should, through negligence or unfaithfulness, lose a great blessing, that it makes me love the Prayer Book and the Church all the more. Thank you, Bessie. I am glad I came. I shall go to bed contented and thankful."

"My dearest Emma, I shall never be able to tell you how much I love to help you in

your difficulties, and explain them away. But before you go, let me tell you one thing. do not be too hasty in your judgments. Now, in this very case, it happens that the Church has so carefully guarded her words, that it only requires an attentive reading to understand her meaning; but, suppose it had not been so; suppose that this injunction, at the close of the Baptismal Office, should read thus: 'This child must be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as he shall be able to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments,' even then, Emma, your interpretation of it would have been very unfair."

"How so, Bessie?"

"Because, Emma, it is always unfair to take an isolated sentence out of any book, and give that as the teaching of the book. It is in this way that so many opposing doctrines have been wrested from the Bible, by taking isolated texts and giving undue prominence to them, and making a doctrine founded upon them necessary to salvation. Now, in studying the Prayer Book, you must compare passage with passage, so as to catch the spirit of the whole; and if

this direction had been written as I have read it to you, you should not have founded any opinion upon it until you had turned to the Confirmation Office, to see what was there required of the candidate; and when you there read, that he acknowledges himself 'bound to believe and do all that his sponsors undertook for him at his baptism,' you should then refer to the Baptismal Office, and see what that was. You will there find that he 'renounced the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh;' that he professed his belief in 'all the articles of the Christian faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed,' and desired to be baptized in that faith; and promised, 'by God's help obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life.' What more than this it requires to qualify a Christian I am sure I cannot tell; and any body that believes and does all these things, is surely entitled to all the privileges of the Church. So you see, Emma, that, under any circumstances, you entirely misconstrued this passage;

and I only beg that you will learn from it a lesson against rushing too rapidly to conclusions. The Church was so very careful to guard against misconstruction here, that she hedged in this injunction with every safe-guard; but yet you see that you did not heed them, but, dismayed by a single glance, you came in to me, ready to abandon the book whose doctrines and teachings and prayers and praises you have all along admired as so perfectly scriptural. Do not think, Emma, that I am finding fault; I only tell you for your comfort. When you come across a difficult and mysterious passage in the Prayer Book, do not be hasty in your judgment; be content to wait a little while, as you do in studying the Bible, and see if, as you go along, light is not thrown upon it from other passages, and much of its hidden mystery disclosed."

"I will try, Bessie, to learn a lesson from my hasty decision. I was punished for it, though only for a little while; for when I came in I was really distressed at the thought of having to give up that Prayer Book, which I did not know before I had learned to love so well."

"I can readily believe, Emma, that you were

grieved, for I saw it plainly written on your countenance. I could scarcely repress a smile when I saw your expression of dismay and sorrow. Good-night, dear Emma; and let me add one thing more: hereafter, in studying Church teachings, take heed to the Church's warning. 'Take care.' Do not be hasty in conclusion, or superficial in reading; but 'take care' to study deeply and draw just inferences, and, so far from this injunction frightening you away from the Baptismal Office, learn from it how closely the Church follows in the footsteps of her Blessed Lord. He called the little children to Him, and laid his hands upon them and blessed them; and she calls the little babes to her, and takes them in her arms, and blesses them, in his name; and when she gives them back to their human guardians to train for her service and her Saviour's, with a mother's yearning heart she follows them, and uplifts a mother's voice as she pleads: 'Take care; take care of my baptized children!'"

CHAPTER VII.

"O! lovely voices of the sky
Which hymn'd the Saviour's birth,
Are ye not singing still on high,
Ye that sang 'Peace on earth'?
To us yet speak the strains
Wherewith, in times gone by,
Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
O voices of the sky!"

HEMANS.

CHRISTMAS morning found Bessie at the comfortable fireside of Mr. Walton, who had, on the previous evening, quietly but affectionately welcomed to his house his young daughter's friend. From Emma's mother Bessie had received a more demonstrative, but not more cordial welcome; and Mrs. Walton, who, as Emma had told Bessie, thought sympathy the healer of all earthly griefs, was determined, by every attention and kindness, to make her guest comfortable and happy, and to dispel, as far as possible, the shade of sadness which rested on a very

lovely countenance, too young, as she thought, to be thus clouded. It was at once evident to Bessie, that the hearts of both parents were bound up in their eldest daughter. Their watchfulness of her every movement, and the expression of affectionate pride which gleamed in the father's eye could not be mistaken. Bessie saw at once that Emma was the ruling spirit at home, and she wondered still more than ever that such indulgence had not spoiled the loveliness of her character; that she should be, in spite of it all, so unselfish, so considerate of the comfort of others, so much disposed to consult the feelings and wishes of all, where she might, if she had chosen, have completely tyrannized.

It was quite late when they arrived the night before, and, as yet, Bessie had not seen all the household. She arose early on Christmas morning that she might have some little time to collect her thoughts, and realize that, while it was a festive day, it was also one of sacred thanksgiving, whose hours she might not consume in levity and frivolity. In the breakfast-room she found the family assembled, waiting for the girls. Father, mother, Charles, and Lucy, with

whose names Bessie had been, for months, so familiar that she could not feel altogether a stranger among them, were seated around a blazing fire, whose cheerful glow was scarcely more radiant than their faces, beaming with pleasure at having daughter and sister once more with them. The servants all came thronging in to see Miss Emma, and their glad countenances, as well as their words of welcome, attested the sincerity of their pleasure; and old nurse, with a familiarity peculiarly her own, clasped her in a warm embrace, and assured her that "indeed the school air must agree with her, for she was even prettier than ever." The congratulations of the season were cordially exchanged, and a sumptuous breakfast, now spread upon the table, promised successfully to tempt the appetite of the young girls, so long accustomed to the very plain food of a boarding-school. As Bessie removed the napkin from her plate, a slight resistance arrested her attention, and she perceived within its folds a small morocco case, on which was written:—

“A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR BESSIE,

FROM

EMMA'S FATHER.”

Very much surprised, she opened it, and saw a beautiful locket breast-pin, which, however, contained no miniature. The explanation flashed at once upon her mind. She had often expressed to Emma a wish to have her mother's miniature handsomely set in a locket-pin, and since her determination to visit the city, she had manifested great pleasure at the opportunity that would then be afforded her of attending to it personally, and having it done entirely to her satisfaction. With delicate forethought Emma had intimated to her father her unwillingness that her own plate should on Christmas morning be heaped with presents while her friend's was empty, and had suggested that a large proportion of the money so lavishly expended on herself at that time should now be appropriated to the purchase of this present for Bessie, which she accurately described. The indulgent father had attended to his daughter's request in every particular except one; the pur-

chase of the breast-pin had not diminished either the number or the value of Emma's presents, but he had, according to her wish, secured the very handsomest pin of that description which the city could afford. It was with great difficulty that Bessie could control herself sufficiently to thank Mr. Walton for his kindness. She was not only deeply touched by this unexpected attention from one to whom she was an utter stranger, but a holier chord than that of gratitude vibrated both pleasingly and painfully, as she remembered those happy Christmas-days of childhood in which a fond mother so carefully provided for the surprise and pleasure of herself and her sister. For an instant she forgot every thing, and her breakfast was untasted before her, and good Mrs. Walton, who was always distressed when her guests seemed to have no appetite, was resolving privately to caution her husband against doing or saying any thing hereafter to discompose their nervous young guest, especially at meal-time.

Bessie was soon recalled to herself by Emma's exclamations of delight, as she unfolded one and another of the many beautiful and val-

uable presents which were on and underneath and around her plate, and behind which she actually seemed intrenched as behind fortifications. Bessie admired them all, and entered cordially into her friend's delight, and at last both the girls had, to Mrs. Walton's great satisfaction, finally settled themselves down to the enjoyment of their breakfast, when a second interruption seemed likely to prove entirely fatal to Bessie's meal. A light, quick footstep in the passage, a hasty entrance into the room, a cordial exchange of greetings: "Emma, I am so glad you are come;" "Mary, I am delighted to see you;" a warm embrace and an affectionate kiss, all followed each other in such rapid succession, that Bessie was only aware that some other of Emma's friends had come in to welcome her. Mr. Walton immediately spoke.

"Miss Seymour, here is our young friend, Bessie Melville. I give both the girls into your charge, only requesting that you will make them as happy as possible during their holidays."

Bessie looked up at the stranger and started, as if stricken by a thunder-bolt. Every one at

the table noticed it, but Emma alone understood it; she at once perceived that Bessie, as well as herself, had been struck by the remarkable resemblance between Miss Seymour's face and that of her mother's miniature. Bessie said not a word, but gazed with a kind of fascination upon a face almost the counterpart of her mother's, even when she first remembered it, and the resemblance to which must have been yet more striking in early youth. She had told Emma, and truly too, that no artist's skill could ever transfer to ivory her mother's eyes; and yet she saw them before her now, reproduced with wonderful accuracy both in color and expression, and looking upon her with that same indescribable lustre which she thought that death and the grave had forever quenched.

Mary Seymour laid aside her bonnet, and the soft, beautiful hair which was then revealed, and the rich glow which mantled upon her cheeks, made hers, indeed, a countenance lovely to look upon. At least so she appeared to Emma and to all; but Bessie saw not, thought not, of beauty; she only knew that she was strangely like her mother.

"And where have you been, thus early, Mary?" inquired Mr. Walton.

"To church, Mr. Walton," replied she. "You know that we have service at St. Paul's at sunrise on Christmas-day."

"Well, well," said he, good-humoredly, "none but industrious people should ever join your Church; and then, too, they should have a good stock of patience, for it makes very large demands upon one's time, and always chooses the holidays, too, to call you to service. I know one little damsel, not very far off, (with a merry glance at Emma,) who is far too lazy to make an Episcopalian. I would like to see you get her up to morning service at sunrise."

"Indeed, father," said Emma, laughing, "you must not slander me so. I only wish I had known that Mary was going to church this morning, and you would have been surprised, I know; but, nevertheless, I would very gladly have accompanied her."

"Nonsense, child," replied her father. "I have always heard that a child sent to an Episcopal school will, most probably, become attached to the forms of that Church, but I can

never be made to believe that three months at the school could have worked such a mighty revolution in my daughter as to make her willing to leave her comfortable bed at sunrise on Christmas morning, of all mornings in the year, to go to church. No, no, Emma; you must tell that to somebody who does not know you so well as papa."

"I tried very hard," said Miss Seymour, "to arouse Lucy this morning, and get her to accompany me; but she seemed to be in a sleep so profound as almost to resemble stupor. I shrewdly suspected, however, all the time, that if any one had stood by, and very quietly spoken of an elegant Christmas gift which papa had purchased for her, she would not have been so fast asleep."

"Yes," said Lucy, laughing, "I heard you all the time; but I knew very well, that if I once acknowledged myself awake, there would be no such thing as getting rid of you, so I concluded that the wisest plan would be, to pretend not to hear you at all."

Breakfast passed off with light, good-humored conversation, in which all joined except Bessie.

Her silence was noted by all; and Mr. Walton, with considerate kindness, tried to shield her as far as possible from observation, by talking all the while. He saw that something had greatly disturbed her, and his feelings and sympathies had been too strongly awakened in her behalf by his daughter, for him to feel disposed to blame her now, for a silence and abstraction which, in another person and under other circumstances, he should have regarded as very inconsiderate, if not grossly impolite.

As soon as she could make her escape, Bessie left the table, and returned to her own room. When she was gone, Mrs. Walton's curiosity broke forth in the inquiry:—

“What on earth, Emma, is the matter with your young friend? If Mary had been a Medusa's head, she could not have produced a more astounding transformation. The child seemed actually turned into stone from the moment that Mary Seymour entered the room.”

“I can explain it all, mother. You know it has only been five or six months since Bessie lost her mother; and from the reverent manner in which she always speaks of her, and the ac-

curacy with which she remembers what she taught her, and her constant desire and effort to do what her mother would approve if she were here; from all these things I suppose that never did a child so nearly worship a mother as Bessie did hers. She thinks, too, that she was the most beautiful being that ever lived, and has a miniature of her, taken very soon after her marriage, which certainly is a most lovely picture. When she showed it to me the first time, I told her that it was beautiful indeed, and that I knew a person strikingly like it. She seemed very incredulous, and told me that this was impossible, for she could not believe that her mother's expression, and especially her eyes, could be duplicated. But the moment Mary came in, I saw at once that the resemblance seemed even more striking to her than it did to me; and when I saw her become so suddenly white as she looked up into Mary's face, I was truly thankful that no worse consequences followed than her being stricken dumb."

"There," said Mr. Walton, with an expression of satisfaction. "I knew that it could all be explained so as to exonerate her from every

imputation of discourtesy or ill-breeding. That child's face would have interested and attracted me, even if I had never heard of her through Emma. Such a face can only be the index to a lovely character; and all you have just said, Emma, about her remarkable reverence and devotion to her mother, renders her still more attractive to me."

"Yes, father; and the more you know of her, the more you will love her. I never saw so young a person so thoroughly imbued with Christian principle, and so constantly guided by it. In this respect she is very remarkable, and religion seems in her beautiful and attractive. I owe Bessie a great deal," she added, thoughtfully, and with emphasis.

The depth of feeling with which Emma spoke these words could not but be observed, and yet none dared ask what she meant by them, for each felt that it was not a question to be answered in the assembled family circle, but rather in the unreserved intercourse of a private hour.

They were all silent for a few moments, and Emma resumed:

"Her mother must have been a most remarkable woman. Bessie has never, even to me, her most intimate friend, spoken of her in terms of extravagant praise. With all her passionate love for her, she has never told me that she was the holiest and the purest Christian that ever lived. She seems to look upon her as far beyond all human praise, and all that I know of her mother's character, I have inferred from what she has told me of her teachings. Father, it is absolutely marvellous to see what clear views of religion a girl of sixteen can have, and as to the Bible and Prayer Book, she is perfectly familiar with both, and is thoroughly acquainted with the teachings of the Church, and can give you the reason for any doctrine or custom, and she always begins her explanation by taking her Bible and turning to some text, or number of texts, to show that the Church has Scripture authority for it; for she seems to think that it would be very horrible to introduce into the Church any teachings, or any usages, which are repugnant to the Word of God. And, with all this, she is so modest and unobtrusive. When I first began to ask her questions, I was afraid

that she would show, either by word or manner, that she thought me very ignorant, and wondered that I should have to come to her for instruction, when she was no older than myself; but never, in a single instance, has she shown any such feeling. She never seems to think that she deserves any credit for what she knows, but, after referring to the Bible, she always prefaces what she adds by reverently saying, 'My mother told me.' Indeed, I have found a valuable friend, and she is the first young companion I ever had whom I loved because she was truly good. I was at first attracted to Bessie by sympathy, because I saw from her mourning-dress and sad face that she had lost some very dear friend, and I felt deeply for her, brought under these circumstances into the midst of strangers, and this sympathy at once awakened in her heart an affection for me characterized by her ardent enthusiasm, and she has for me the love of a sister. But, even if this were not so, if she were actually indifferent to me, I could not help loving and reverencing her character."

This conversation had presented to Mr. and Mrs. Walton an entirely new phase of their

daughter's character. Themselves not governed by any Christian principles, they had never endeavored to instil them into her heart; and to see the child who had left them but a few months before, gay and frivolous, now showing a depth of reflection and discernment of which they believed one of her years incapable, and an admiration of the pure and holy which they deemed altogether inconsistent with her natural disposition, was something which amazed them. They inferred from her words, that this transformation was attributable to her intercourse with Bessie; but this rather increased their surprise, for they could not at all understand that one so young could wield such a powerful influence for good, and at the same time inspire an affection which almost deepened into reverence.

They were all silent for a little while, and Mary Seymour, who, as well as Emma's parents, had been surprised at all she had heard, was the first to speak.

"And do you, Emma, see any resemblance between my face and her mother's? I should like to resemble, in appearance at least, if I

might not in any other particular, one so pure and holy as you have described her."

"Yes, Mary, you are wonderfully like Mrs. Melville's miniature."

"Emma," said Mr. Walton, "can you not let us have a glimpse of this miniature? I feel quite a curiosity to see it, for I think it is very strange that it should be so much like Mary. There must be some fancy in it."

"No, father, indeed it is not fancy. I would like to convince you of it by showing it to you; but I cannot do this. After a while, when Bessie knows you better, she will take great pleasure in showing it to you; but she has peculiar notions about its sacredness, and would almost consider it a sacrilege for any person to look upon it, except some one whom she dearly loved. She will show it to you, father, before any other member of the family, for your Christmas gift this morning opened a direct avenue to her affections. She has been talking to me, for weeks, of the pleasure she anticipated in attending herself to the setting of that miniature in a locket breast-pin; and she will value that present from you, more than

any thing you could possibly have given her. She seems gentle and quiet, and yet, as I told you before, she is full of impulse, and now she will love you as long as she lives, because you will be associated with her mother's miniature. I am perfectly confident that if you will wait a few days she will volunteer to show it to you, and if she does, she will be giving you the very highest proof of her confidence and affection."

"Well, my daughter, I am truly glad, that my present proved so acceptable, and I must thank you for the suggestion, for I am sure that I might have tried a long while to think what gift she would most value, and this never would have occurred to me. I suppose from all you have told me of Bessie's thorough acquaintance with the Prayer Book, that she must be an Episcopalian."

"Yes, father, she is; and although she would be greatly amazed at the idea of herself or any one else being an ornament to the Church, yet that is just what I think she is. She knows nothing at all about any other church except her own; and when I have asked questions

about the others, she seems quite as ignorant as I am."

"I trust her mother has not made a bigot of her," said Mr. Walton warmly.

"If by a bigot, father, you mean a narrow-minded religionist who measures every body by his own contracted views, and condemns as wrong all who follow not with him, then is Bessie farther from being one, than any professed Christian I ever knew; but if by the word you mean one who believes that she is in the right Church, who loves that Church with a daughter's affections, and confides in its teachings with a daughter's trust, then is Bessie Melville the veriest bigot I ever saw."

"Well, how is it then, Emma, that she knows nothing except what is taught in the Episcopal Church?"

"I asked her that question myself, father, and she only replied: 'Because, Emma, mother never taught me.'"

"Well, Emma," said Miss Seymour, "this conversation has been exceedingly pleasant to me, and makes me long to know more of your young friend. I am not flattering you when I say that,

by no means the least recommendation to me is the fact, that she has thus warmly enlisted your affections. I would like very much to listen longer to you, but the clock warns me to prepare for service again. Your father, I see, is about leaving for his morning walk, so you will be left alone with your mother and Lucy, and you then can have a little cozy conversation while all the rest of us are away."

"No, Mary, you will not leave me, for I am going to church myself, and I know that Bessie expects to go. We will be ready in a few minutes and meet you in the parlor."

"Why, Emma," said Mrs. Walton, "I do not see any necessity for your going with Bessie. Now, if Mary were not here, politeness would, of course, require that you should make any personal sacrifice to gratify your guest and enable her to spend the day in the manner most agreeable to her, but, as Mary is going with her, I cannot see that it would be impolite for you to remain at home."

"My dear mother," said Emma, laughing, "you give me credit for a great deal more politeness than I really possess. Indeed, this

never entered into my thoughts at all, and I have been just selfish enough to think only of gratifying my own inclinations when I determined to go to church. I am not going because Bessie will expect or desire it; I am going simply to please myself."

Mary Seymour and Emma now left the room, leaving Mrs. Walton musing in silent wonder upon the singular change which had been wrought in a girl, once so averse to going to church, that it required all a mother's influence to induce her to go twice on Sunday, while now she seemed not only willing, but anxious, to go upon a day which, of all others, the young prefer to spend in festivity and amusement. And Mary Seymour wondered, too, at the extraordinary influence which one of Bessie's age was enabled to exert over a companion as old as herself, and longed to know more of that mother who had trained that remarkable child, and whom she was said so much to resemble.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh! say not, dream not, heavenly notes
To childish ears are vain;
That the young mind at random floats,
And cannot reach the strain.
Dim or unheard, the words may fall,
And yet, the heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind."

KEBLE.

DURING the three months that had passed since Bessie's departure, things had gone on very quietly at the rectory. The family circle was now reduced to Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy and Mary, Willie having been sent off to school. The quiet monotony of their life was only varied by letters from the absent children, and it was part of their weekly duty to send off to each of them a faithful picture of the family sayings and doings. To Mary's special care had been entrusted, by Bessie, her canary-bird, the sweet-singing Jennie Lind of her childhood, and by

Willie, "the lamb;" and to her own childish view she seemed burdened by a heavy responsibility, and enlarged in dignity and importance as such valued treasures were committed to her keeping.

It was Christmas eve: a bright, glowing fire, a nicely-spread tea-table, papa's large rocking-chair, and his slippers on the rug before the fire becoming comfortably warm, Mrs. Kennedy and her little girl awaiting the return of the husband and father; all these things gave to that small, but neat, apartment such a home-like aspect, that one could almost envy him for whose comfort all these arrangements had been made, and whose return seemed so eagerly expected.

At last Mr. Kennedy came in.

"Why, papa," said Mary, "what makes you so late to-night?"

"Well, my little daughter, I have had a great deal to do to-day. A poor sick woman sent for me, and I spent two hours talking with her and administering the Communion to her; and I have had all my preparations to make for service to-morrow, besides being sent for two or three times by the ladies at the church, to consult about the disposal of some of the evergreens.

I was writing in my study until quite dark, and on my way home I remembered that I had not been to the post-office to-day, and so I went there. This is why I am so late."

"Any letters?" inquired Mrs. Kennedy, anxiously.

"Yes; one from each of the children. You may take Bessie's, as that is for you, and I will read Willie's."

"And what will I do, papa, while you and mamma are both reading letters?"

"You will be very quiet, my daughter, and not disturb us, and when we have finished, I will read them both to you."

"Well, papa, I will try and sit still if you say so, but I think I know a better way of reading the letters than that."

"And what is that, Mary?"

"I think if you would read them aloud, then you, and mamma, and I, too, could all hear them together, and I would not have to wait so long."

"Thank you for the suggestion, Mary," said her father, laughing. "Yours is the better plan, and I will adopt it so soon as I have taken off

my over-coat, and exchanged my boots for the nice warm slippers which you have so thoughtfully prepared. So, mother, give back Bessie's letter. You cannot read it alone, but, after Willie's, I will read it aloud for the benefit of all."

Mr. Kennedy was soon seated in his rocking-chair, and drawing the lamp close to him, and putting on his spectacles, prepared to read the letters. He broke the seal of Willie's, and as his eye glanced down the closely-written pages, he said:—

"This promises to be an interesting letter; I think I can catch a glimpse of an incident recorded in it.

He then began:—

"Although, my dearest father, I have written home only two days ago, yet I feel that I must write again, this very night, to tell you of a remarkable circumstance which occurred here to-day, and to ask for counsel as to what I am to do. In this retired spot, on the very outskirts, as it were, of civilization, and far removed from the busy world, you will scarcely wonder that among thirty boys, any thing to vary the dull

monotony would be hailed with pleasure, and that we might, perhaps, be tempted to attach undue importance to incidents which in more stirring scenes might be deemed trivial; but I think that any one would acknowledge as remarkable the occurrence which I am about to relate.

“We were all assembled, as usual, in the chapel this morning, and the service had begun. The exhortation was being read when the door opened, and a young Indian dressed as a warrior entered, and seated himself on the bench just in front of me. This was an unusual circumstance, though not by any means an extraordinary one, for as the Indian country is not very far off, it has happened several times, since I have been here, that Indian youths have brought into the school-premises moccasins, feather ornaments, and other specimens of their work to be purchased by the boys. However, no one had ever before strayed into the chapel, and his presence there, a heathen Indian, dressed in the habiliments of savage warfare, forming one of a congregation of Christian worshippers, seemed very strange and incongruous. I noticed

with surprise, that he invariably followed our postures, and rose up and sat down with the rest of us, and behaved himself with propriety and reverence, as if he really knew where he was, and what he was doing. But the most remarkable thing remains to be told. I have already said that he took a seat immediately in front of me, and I must acknowledge that his whole demeanor so excited my curiosity, that I watched him more narrowly than was consistent with my own devotions. We all arose to repeat the Creed; his side face was turned towards me, and as the first words were pronounced, there was upon his countenance a faint gleam of recognition, as if he were listening to some old but long-forgotten strain; and as we said, 'And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,' lowly and reverently he bowed his head, although he did not utter a word.

"As soon as service was over, we all gathered around him in the yard, and began to question him, but he only replied by shaking his head. We resorted to the usual expedients of making him comprehend us, by using isolated words, especially those referring to articles of

barter and trade, for we have sometimes found that when the Indians accustomed to trade with the whites could not understand long connected sentences, we could convey our ideas by means of simple disconnected words pronounced very slowly and distinctly. But all this we tried in vain, and we saw, by the stolid expression of countenance and the cold dull eye, that he was not acting a part, but that he really and truly did not receive from our words a single idea.

“We were all utterly baffled; our resources were exhausted, and one of the boys cried out, ‘I will go and bring old Aunt Dinah; she can interpret for us.’ Aunt Dinah is the old servant who cooks for us, and she has lived on the frontier long enough to become sufficiently familiar with two or three of the Indian dialects, to make herself understood. But while my companion went to summon her, a sudden thought flashed across my mind. I remembered the Creed, and concluded, from his gesture and manner in church, that he must be familiar with that. I walked up close to him, fixed my eye upon him, and very slowly and distinct-

ly began:—‘I believe in God, the Father Almighty.’

“His eye kindled, his face brightened, his vigorous form expanded into its full erect height, and then meekly folding his hands, as mother taught me to do when I could first lisp my Belief, he repeated it with me, hesitatingly and falteringly, it is true, but with sufficient distinctness to show that he had been at some time of his life familiar with those words, and as before, he bowed at our Saviour’s name.

“Our wildest conjectures were entirely at fault. Our teacher came, but he could not communicate with him, and Aunt Dinah’s so-called Indian language seemed as unintelligible jargon to him as it was to us. His form is a splendid one; erect and stately, with a muscular development which indicates great strength combined with lightness and activity. In figure he is a genuine Indian, but in no other respect. His eye is a dark blue, with a singularly beautiful expression; his hair is what we call black, but still not of that raven blackness which belongs to his race; neither is it stiff and coarse, but soft and flexible, and his complex-

ion seems to be rather bronzed by exposure than originally copper-colored.

“Of course, there is great interest awakened among us, and our curiosity is sorely tried, but the mystery never can be solved as long as the insurmountable barrier of language prevents all interchange of thought. He seemed to have no intention of going away, and, as our accommodations are very strictly limited to our necessities, there was no alternative except for one of us to share our room with him, or leave him to sleep on the cold ground in a December night. This I could not be unfeeling enough to allow, even though it is not at all improbable that he has endured much greater hardships, and so I brought him into my own room, where he is now lying on the floor, wrapped in his blanket and apparently enjoying refreshing sleep. I pointed to the bed and closed my eyes, to intimate that he might sleep there, but he shook his head and laid himself down in front of the fire. I have conversed with our teacher about him, and his curiosity seems to have been quite as much excited as that of the boys. He does not think that he can have belonged to one of

the mission schools, because, in that event, he would have learned the Creed in his own language and not in ours. And yet, the very fact that he can repeat it in our own tongue seems to give the assurance that at some time of his life he must have been more or less familiar with the language, and awakens the hope that if we could only revive his acquaintance with it, we would have some basis on which to construct a Christian education. We would not have first to unlearn him all the degrading teachings of heathenism, but would find ready for us the articles of a pure Christian faith, on which to rear the superstructure of a religious life. I can scarcely make you understand, my dear father, how this incident has excited and interested me. One would think that my quiet, phlegmatic temperament had caught somewhat of Bessie's enthusiasm and ardor, as in the last few hours my imagination has run riot in devising a thousand plans, alike impracticable to sober sense, for the education of this young Indian. Our teacher smiles provokingly at all my suggestions, and brings down all my flights of fancy with the prosy reply, 'This is very well,

Willie, if we could only do it; but suppose, as is most probable, that to-morrow morning your young *protégé* should quietly turn his back upon the school-grounds and return to his forest home, how would you detain him? how make him understand all your philanthropic purposes with regard to him? how convey to his mind that you are generous enough to be willing yourself to go to work to defray the expenses of his education, and have him trained for a missionary to his own people?' This, father, is, I confess, an apparently insurmountable obstacle; but I am not willing, as yet, to yield to it. There is, there must be, some avenue to his understanding much more easily reached than it would be if, a totally untutored savage, he had never heard of that name of Jesus, at the sound of which he now so reverently bows. The missionaries to the Indian tribes are not deterred from their work of love by having to learn thoroughly a savage language: why should I yield without an effort when I have, at least, the hope of being able, before a great while, to communicate with him in my own? Father, I am determined to try. You know that you and my

mother consecrated me, in my infancy, to the missionary work, and have, thus far, trained me to look forward to it as my profession. It may be, that this very circumstance may be the means of pointing out to me in what part of the missionary field God designs me to work; and if successful in opening the mind and heart of one Indian to religious truth, why could I not teach another, and even hundreds more? I hope, my dear father, that you may not think me as chimerical as my teacher evidently does. Of course, a boy cannot be expected to weigh probabilities and see difficulties with the eye of maturer age. Of one thing I am certain, that I will have the sympathy and approbation of both my parents, who will believe that, however deficient in ability to execute my purposes, I am, nevertheless, actuated by a sincere desire to do good, and to lead an ignorant human being to a knowledge of our great and good Father in Heaven.

“My plans, as yet crude and unformed, are somewhat thus. If I can succeed in keeping this youth here a few weeks, I know that I can by that time, learn to talk with him, at least by signs; although my first attempt shall be to se-

if he did not once know more of the English language than merely how to repeat the Apostles' Creed. I can succeed in conveying to him some faint idea of my intentions with regard to him, but then even, with his full concurrence in my plans, I meet just here another great obstacle. Where am I to get the money to educate him? Could you not succeed in awakening some interest in him in your parish? I am fully aware that the church is small, and that there are very heavy demands made yearly upon the liberality of its members, but, dear father, do try and see if you cannot help me; and tell little Mary, too, (who has a good deal of Bessie's enthusiastic nature, and whose dilated eyes I should like to see as you read to her about this Indian warrior, with his blanket and moccasins, his bow in his hand and quiver at his back, and his scalp-lock tied on the top of his head;) tell her that brother Willie says she must speak to the little Sunday-school children about it, and see if they will not all agree to work and get some money to have this Indian taught to read his Bible and Prayer Book, and to be a sincere Christian.

“I have written you, my dear father, a very

long letter ; to any one else I would apologize for thus taxing his patience, but I know full well with what pleasure all my letters, however prosy, are read by my kind parents ; and that you will both be interested in reading this, if for no other reason, because I have been interested in writing it. It is growing very late, and as we are aroused at day-light, I must now stop and go to bed ; although, if I consulted my own inclination, I could write all night about what my teacher calls my Indian *protégé*. I forgot to tell you that when I was talking to him about his education, and how to devise the means for it, with a provokingly incredulous smile, he said that if we could manage to keep him and teach him English, he would undertake his education at half price. I will write again, in a day or two, and let you know the state of things. Warmest love for yourself, mother and little sister. I had a letter from Bessie yesterday. She seems contented at school, and says she has found there a very lovely friend.

“ Your devoted son,

“ WILLIE.”

“ Well,” said Mr. Kennedy, as he laid down

the closely written sheets, "this is a long letter, and, to me, a very interesting one. Willie is a little hasty in his plans, it is true, and I am afraid, too sanguine of success; but I can excuse the fault for the sake of the motive. Boys of his age are not often too hasty in trying to do good. Wife, that youth promises to be a great comfort to us in our declining years."

"Indeed he does," replied Mrs. Kennedy. "As he says, we consecrated him to the missionary work, in his infancy, and however great the struggle to give him up, yet, if I live to see him a faithful missionary, no matter where, the dearest wish of my heart will be fulfilled."

"Mamma," said Mary, "may I ring the bell for Julia to get a candle and go up-stairs with me?"

"What for, Mary?" inquired her mother.

"I want to get my cloak and bonnet and gloves, and bring them all down here in the dining-room."

"And what is that for, Mary?"

"I am going to start, in the morning, the very minute I have finished my breakfast, to see the little girls in my Sunday-school class, and tell

them about making money for brother Willie's Indian boy, and it will be losing so much time, mamma, to have to go up-stairs and look for all my things."

"Upon my word, Mary," said Mr. Kennedy, laughing, "your enthusiastic haste is, if possible, even more excessive than your brother's. But you must not be in such a hurry; you must wait until you hear from Willie again. Your exertions and trouble would, you know, be very useless if the young Indian should (as your brother says he may) turn his back upon the school and never see it any more. It is very pleasant, my daughter, to see my children so eager to do good, and yet I must, in this instance, advise a little delay. But it is time that we should look into Bessie's letter; we have already slighted that too long."

He then read aloud the letter, written in Bessie's usual style, abounding in strong epithets of affection and warm ebullitions of feeling. She told them of her intended visit to Emma Walton's home, and spoke in strong terms of admiration of the character of her new friend; and as she touched upon some of the points of her charac-

ter, she manifested a discrimination which surprised Mr. Kennedy, and assured him that her affection, however sudden in its rise, was not at all misplaced.

When he had finished reading the letter, Mrs. Kennedy said, "Do you not feel a little anxious, Mr. Kennedy, about Bessie's thus forming intimate friendships, and visiting for weeks in families of which we know nothing? Would it not be safer to write to her and advise her to spend her Christmas holidays at school, or, if she prefers it, to come back home? She is very young and easily influenced; it would be a great pity to expose her to any influences which might mar the loveliness of her Christian character, and blight the fruits of a mother's patient toil during a whole lifetime."

"I do not think it necessary to use any of these precautions," replied her husband. "It is strange with what different feelings we see the child of a Christian mother and the child of a godless parent launched upon the sea of life. One we almost certainly expect to see make fearful shipwreck; the other will be tossed and buffeted upon the waves and entangled among

the breakers, but in the end we hope and believe that he will safely pass them all. Bessie is, as you say, young, excitable, easily influenced; such is her natural temperament, and yet, Christian principles have been so deeply implanted in her heart from her earliest childhood, and their growth so carefully watched and promoted, that they have strengthened with her strength, until her whole being is under their influence. You know, wife, that one of the very bulwarks of my faith is my belief in Infant Baptism, and both observation and experience convince me, more and more every day, that I am right in this belief. Now, I am fully persuaded, that if ever a human being did faithfully, conscientiously, and devoutly fulfil her part of the Baptismal obligation, Mrs. Melville was that person. It is true, that, in Jennie's case, she had a very remarkable child to guide and instruct, and perhaps some persons might think that her unusual piety, at so early an age, proved nothing in the present case; but with Bessie it was very different. She was like all other children; if any thing, more wayward, impulsive, and headstrong than children usually are; and taking

her natural disposition into consideration, the result with her is more astonishing than it was with her gentler, more docile, sister. Her mother faithfully fulfilled her promises made at her child's baptism, the Saviour could not but fulfil His, and the result has been the development of the hasty, impetuous child into a young girl, warm-hearted and impulsive still, but under the restraint and guidance of firm, unwavering Christian principle. I am not afraid to trust Bessie. It is true, that for her own comfort, I would prefer that she should always be under such influences as would best promote the growth of her religion; but under any circumstances I would never anxiously tremble for the result. I would always feel assured that her Christian principle would eventually triumph. I know nothing of the family into which she is going, but of one thing I am persuaded, her example and influence will have a good effect; I see it already in the modest manner in which she speaks of endeavoring to travel over with her new friend the very same ground of Bible and Prayer Book teachings which her mother pursued with her. Just put away now all anxieties about her; you

may depend upon it that the Saviour, who promised such blessings to her when she had a mother to guide and teach her, will not desert her now when, an orphan, she must travel alone the devious pathway of life. I believe that the efficacy of Infant Baptism extends to the very latest period of our earthly life; and when its just results do not follow, I am persuaded that in almost every instance the failure may be traced to unfaithfulness on the part of the sponsors. But it is very late, and I am afraid that unless I go to bed, I shall not be prepared for the duties of to-morrow."

CHAPTER IX.

How shall I make him understand? Words
Are but useless sounds. Babel, thy jargon still
Perpetuates thy folly, though thy tower
Is crumbled into dust.

WEARIED with his late hours and his mental excitement, Willie Kennedy slept long and soundly the morning after he had written to his father. The daylight bell failed to break his deep slumbers, and when he at last awoke, the bright December sun was streaming in at his window, and his first consciousness brought with it the thought that for this unusual sleep he must pay the penalty of a forfeit mark. When thoroughly awake he recollected the companion who had shared his room, but the Indian was gone, and with his disappearance all Willie's dreams about the pleasure of having him educated and his future usefulness among his own people, were scattered as suddenly as they had sprung into

existence. After a hasty toilet he went into the yard, but all was quiet there. Not a boy was to be seen, and he was just turning to enter the school-room, when, in the extreme corner of the grounds, he saw a figure reclining under a spreading oak. He approached him cautiously, thinking that he might be asleep, but before he could get near enough to distinguish any thing, except that it was a human being, the quick ear of the young Indian detected his approach, and springing from the ground he came to meet him. Willie made several signs to him but he only shook his head, while not a gleam of intelligence lightened up his face. They walked together towards the oak tree, and there on the grass, beside his bow and quiver, lay Willie's Prayer Book, whose accustomed place was with his Bible, on the table in his private room.

In his surprise, Willie eagerly asked :

"What do you know of that book?"

A shake of the head, in reply, reminded him what, between them, words were only useless sounds. He opened the Prayer Book and pointed to the Creed, and looked into his friend's face, but met with no response. Neither printed nor

spoken words seemed to convey any meaning to his mind. For an instant he was baffled; but, suddenly, he thought that his new acquaintance might, possibly, be as familiar with the Lord's Prayer as he was with the Creed. He remembered that the Church particularly enjoins the teaching of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and he thought it probable that the same careful person who had instructed him in one might have taught him the others also. He touched him, to attract his attention, and very slowly began to repeat the Creed, and this time the Indian said with him every word of it. When they had finished, Willie paused a moment, and then began to say the Lord's Prayer. He spoke each word with great distinctness, and narrowly watched the expression of his companion's face. At first, it was plainly surprise, then, by degrees, there stole over his features a faint expression of recognition, as if the words awoke long-buried memories, and, by the time Willie had finished, his whole countenance lighted up, and his bright eye flashed, and his lips moved, and then burst forth an ejaculation, whose meaning Willie could not, of

course, understand, although it assured him that his new friend must have been deeply moved to show so much feeling. He made several signs, none of which Willie could comprehend, but at last he succeeded in making him understand that he wished him to repeat it again, which Willie accordingly did; and this time, as when he first said the Creed, he followed him, hesitatingly, in every petition. Willie's next attempt was with the Commandments, but this effort was entirely unsuccessful. There was no indication whatever that the words did not fall then upon his ear for the first time, and Willie, therefore, went back again to the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, repeating them again and again, and apparently affording to the young Indian quite as much pleasure as he himself enjoyed. It was difficult to decide which was the most delighted and surprised. Both seemed to feel that there was, at least, one common ground whereon they might stand, and some words which they could equally understand, and they did not weary of repeating them together. Willie forgot his school and every thing connected with it. Forfeit-marks and penalties were alike disregarded, and the

two sat upon the grass for an hour trying, with persevering efforts, to convey their meaning by signs. Occasionally, in his impatience and eagerness, Willie would so far forget himself as to give vent to his feelings in words, but this the Indian never did. He was never betrayed into this but once, and then, by the words of our Saviour's Prayer. The contrast between the two, as they sat, side by side, was very striking. Willie's countenance glowed with animation and intense excitement as, with vehement gesticulation, he endeavored to make himself understood, while his companion calmly and quietly expressed his thoughts by signs much more intelligible than Willie's violent gestures, while nothing but a bright gleam of the eye betrayed his interest in the conversation.

Willie's curiosity to know all about his new friend was fast becoming intolerable. The consciousness that there was no way of satisfying it, only increased it, and the few ideas which, by signs, they were able to interchange, were just enough to tantalize him beyond endurance. But there was no alternative, except by patient continuance and unwearied effort, to establish be-

tween them a method of communication by signs, and, at the same time, to familiarize him with the sound of the English tongue. Willie hoped, in this way, to revive his recollections of what he had once known, for he could not divest himself of the belief that his Indian acquaintance had, at some period of his life, been familiar with our language. Hence his impatience: he seemed to be fostering the belief that, after a few days, it would all come back to him, and he would suddenly find himself as familiar with the accents of the English tongue as if it were his native language; but, as day after day passed, and his friend made, apparently, no advances, and all seemed strange sounds except the words of his Belief and his Prayer, Willie was not only very much disappointed, but became more and more bewildered, and began to grow impatient. He found that he soon learned to understand the young savage, but was himself singularly awkward in making signs, and frequently, after trying for a quarter of an hour to express an idea, was obliged to give it up as wholly unsuccessful.

A week had passed by, and the Indian seemed

to have settled himself quietly at the school. His appearance on the premises no longer excited surprise, and the brief excitement, caused by his arrival, had died away. He was regularly at the chapel services, always repeated the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and conformed to all the postures of the other worshippers. He frequently walked into the school-room during the hours of recitation, and never caused any interruption, but would sit quietly for a while, watching the countenances of the teacher and pupils, and then, as quietly leave the room. Willie frequently saw his little Prayer Book in his hand, and watched him attentively as he turned over the pages, hoping, he scarcely knew why, that the sight of some printed word might dart, like a sunbeam, into his mind, and awaken its sleeping memories, and clear away the mists of forgetfulness. It was singular to see him with that Prayer Book, and seemed very strange to Willie, that he never noticed any book except that. It was very evident that the words conveyed no ideas to his mind, for his thoughts always seemed far away whenever he was busily engaged turning over the leaves; and yet the book must

have possessed some fascination for him, because it was frequently in his hand, as often as four or five times in the course of a single day. This was another aggravation to Willie's curiosity, but the mystery could not be solved. He tried, in every conceivable way, to ask him something about his knowledge of the Prayer Book, and his preference for it, but it was of no avail.

He had written two other letters to his father beside the first, and assured him that from appearances the Indian intended to remain there, and that he might begin to make some effort with regard to raising funds for his education; and told him that though baffled thus far, and frequently discouraged when he thought of the difficulties in the way, still he did not intend to relinquish his project. He had just dispatched his last letter to his father; it was the tenth day since the appearance of the Indian at the chapel, when, at the noon recess, while Willie was playing ball with several boys, he was summoned away by a significant gesture from his new friend. They went together, Willie following the Indian until they reached the outskirts of a large, deep grove, whose stillness had never

been disturbed by the sound of the woodman's axe. The Indian paused, looked very attentively at Willie, and with great decision of manner, took from his pocket Willie's Prayer Book, which he showed him, pointed far away into the depths of the forest, and, lifting his finger towards the sun, then at the meridian, he made with it three revolutions, stopping each time as he pointed to the sun, and numbering upon his fingers one, two, three; and lastly, turned towards the chapel, and pointed to it. Willie at once understood what he meant. The three revolutions of the sun which he indicated were three days; he was going away to his home, and would return at the expiration of that time. Willie tried by every sign he could make to persuade him not to go. He endeavored to make him understand what he intended to do for him if he would only remain; but the resolution was taken, and, with the unalterable determination of his race, he proceeded to put it into execution. Willie was bitterly disappointed; he never expected to see him again, and just began to realize how utterly chimerical had been all his plans. His friend shook him cordially by the hand, and by

gesture and manner, expressed as plainly as he could have done by words, his gratitude for all the kindness he had received. Willie bade him a kind but sorrowful farewell, and then motioned for the Prayer Book, which the Indian held in his hand; but a very decided and positive shake of the head, surprised at the same time that it annoyed him. It was an old book, the same which his father had used when of his own age, and during his whole theological course, and was the first Prayer Book which was ever put into his hand. He entreated and expostulated, but in vain; and then, determined not to give it up without a struggle, he sprang forward to seize it, but a moment's effort proved that in activity he was no match for the son of the forest, who, with the fleetness of the antelope, eluded his grasp, and was in a few minutes lost to sight in the depths of the woods.

Motionless with surprise, Willie stood with straining eyes, hoping to catch a glimpse of his companion among the trees, and when he found that this was vain, he still waited to see if the whole affair were not a jest, and if in a few minutes he would not see his friend returning

to him with the book which he so much valued. At last, with mingled feelings of disappointment and indignation, he retraced his steps to the school, indulging in no very pleasing reflections upon the ingratitude of the world, reflections by no means uncommon to the young and enthusiastic when disappointed in their first effort to do good; before they have learned cheerfully to work, and patiently to wait for results, which at first they expect immediately to behold. He did not join his companions in their sports, but went quietly to his own room, and sat down to vent his feelings in a letter to his mother, acknowledging with sorrow, and it may be, with a little shame too, upon what slender foundations he had reared that beautiful superstructure of Indian civilization and religious culture, which had so lately filled his heart and brain; and how his air-castles of heroic self-devotion to the cause of the degraded Indian, had proved but "the baseless fabric of a vision." His feelings exhausted themselves in a few lines of complaint, and, throwing his unfinished letter upon the table, he resolved to waste no more thoughts or regrets upon his ungrateful friend.

CHAPTER X.

"I call thee blest!—though now the voice be fled,
Which to thy soul brought day-spring with its tone;
And o'er the gentle eyes though dust be spread,
Eyes that ne'er looked on thine but light was thrown
Far through thy breast:

"And thou from all the daughters of the earth
Singled and marked, hast *known* its home and place;
And the high memory of its holy worth,
To this our life, a glory and a grace,
For thee hath given."

HEMANS.

It had only required a few days fully to domesticate Bessie in Mr. Walton's family. She very soon endeared herself to them all, especially to the parents, who, as they watched her, day after day, and saw blended with the simplicity of the child, the firmness of the mature Christian, first regarded her as a wonder, then loved her for herself, and finally, began themselves to feel for the mother who had trained her, somewhat of that reverence which was so beautiful a trait in her character.

Between Bessie and Mary Seymour there soon existed a warm attachment. The loneliness of their condition in life formed at once a strong bond of sympathy between them; but, in all their intercourse, Mary was every day more and more sadly impressed with the fact, that Bessie, though now an orphan, like herself, had, nevertheless, enjoyed a blessing which had never been conferred upon her—a powerful maternal influence, to which she had been an utter stranger—a glow of maternal tenderness, which had never shone upon her sunless childhood. This thought seemed to oppress her, to lie, like a heavy burden, upon her heart, and, at last, one day it vented itself in the strange remark:

“Bessie, do you know that I think God has blessed you more abundantly than any other human being I have ever seen? You arose immediately before my mind this morning when I read that verse in the Psalms: ‘The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage.’”

Bessie looked at her for an instant in silence, too much amazed to reply, and then exclaimed almost passionately:

“‘A goodly heritage!’ A lone orphan child, with no human being upon whom I have any claim! no father, mother, brother, sister—”

She checked herself, and then added, in a voice of gentle submission, altogether unlike the excitement into which she had been momentarily betrayed by the impetuosity of her old nature:

“I do not wish to murmur. I know that it is all right, and I ought not to call myself an orphan when I have a Father in Heaven and a mother on earth, in his Church; but, oh Mary! when you used the words ‘pleasant places,’ and ‘a goodly heritage,’ with reference to my situation, it sent such a pang through my heart, that I scarcely knew what I said. I take it back: I am not an orphan. Mother told me that I never could be as long as that verse remained in the Bible, ‘I will be a Father to the fatherless.’”

“Bessie,” replied Mary, “it is in the possession of this very mother that I think you have been blessed so far above every child I ever knew. In her you surely had ‘a goodly heritage,’ with her the footsteps of your childhood surely walked in pleasant places.’”

"Yes, Mary; but do you not know that, because she was such a mother, therefore, in losing her, I have been more sorely bereaved than other children are when they lose a parent not so faithful and affectionate?"

"Ah, Bessie," replied her friend, "you do not, cannot, know the utter desolation, the heart-emptiness of looking far back through the long vista of childhood, into the twilight of infancy, and not having one ray of a mother's love to kindle the dreary recollection, to have not one look, or word, or tone engraved upon the memory; to have to learn from others that you ever had a mother, and how she looked."

She paused, and compressing her lips, added with bitterness:

"And if this meagre information be withheld, if they will not tell you, will not talk about—"

She checked herself, and then said:

"How different, in this respect, Bessie, is your condition from mine. The most precious memories linger around your early home, lightened and gladdened, as it was, by a mother's affection. You remember how she looked, can recall the expression of countenance with which many

of her instructions were accompanied, can remember the tones of her voice, the very words she used. Oh, Bessie, there is nothing on this earth that I would not give for such recollections as yours. Never did a poor, desolate child so long and yearn for a mother's love to fill her little empty heart, never was a childhood so sunless, so destitute of every circumstance that would entitle it to the name, 'the spring-time of being.'"

Bessie had never before heard Mary Seymour allude to her childhood, and having learned from Emma how resolutely silent she was with regard to it, she had carefully avoided any reference to it; but now, encouraged by Mary's voluntary introduction of the subject, she ventured, timidly, to inquire:

"And why, Mary, was your childhood so unhappy? I have longed to know something of your early life, and felt sure that I could enter into all your feelings, for if there is a bond of sympathy between any two beings upon earth, it is the one which unites two orphan girls."

"Bessie, you may feel for me, but you cannot, as you say, 'enter into my feelings.' A

cloud, it is true, rests upon your early life, but its gloom is lightened and its edges fringed with the bright radiance of Heaven's own sunlight; but mine is all dark, sadly, fearfully dark. When we first met, I had learned from Emma that you were an orphan, and I needed but to look at your face to see that you deeply felt the loss you had sustained, and, like yourself, I felt that there was a tie between us which could not bind you to any of the members of this happy family circle. But I have learned to think otherwise, and every allusion to your home, every lighting up of your countenance, as some bright memory flits across your mind, every time I have heard you say 'Mother told me,' I have felt a pang which was almost intolerable, and have realized that, between us there is a wall of separation which must be insurmountable; that I need not expect from you that sympathy which I at first fondly hoped to receive, not because you are unwilling, but because you are unable to give it."

"I can give it," said Bessie, earnestly, "and I will. Ever since Emma told me about you, long before we met, I felt interested in you, be-

cause she said that you were strangely like my mother's miniature. This I thought simply impossible; but when I saw you, I was so startled by the resemblance that my heart actually stood still. This, of course, only heightened my desire to know something of your early history, but our brief acquaintance naturally forbade any allusion to a subject which you seemed carefully to avoid."

"You need not expect, Bessie, to hear any thing exciting, or even interesting. What causes me so much pain is the consciousness that my childhood is a perfect blank, that I seem to have had neither father, mother, nor home, and that those with whom I lived were so obstinately determined not to satisfy my curiosity on these points, that the impression is left upon my mind, that there is some dark mystery which overshadowed my birth.

"My first recollections carry me back to an elegantly furnished house in the city of New York, where I lived with an aunt, whose name of Seymour I have, though I sometimes doubt that it belongs to me. She had no children, was devoted to fashion and the world; was an

amiable woman, and, therefore, by no means unkind to me; but my very first consciousness was that yearning for affectionate and caressing care which the child's heart imperatively demands, and without which it will not be happy, even if it should meet with no positive unkindness.

Long before I knew why it was, I felt that I was differently situated from the little children with whom I played, and I never shall forget going home from school one day with a little girl, whose mother immediately called her up to her, untied her bonnet, smoothed the hair from her face and kissed her. I watched her in silence, and presently the tears came. I tried hard to keep them back, for I was a stranger there; but they would come, and sitting down on the floor, I buried my face in my hands and cried as if my heart would break. The kind-hearted woman looked at me, first with surprise, and then with pity, and, lifting me from the floor seated me upon her lap, and inquired what was the matter, if I was sick. As soon as I could speak I sobbed out: 'I have just found out the reason why I am not like all the other

little girls. I have no mother. Nobody ever kisses me.'

"The good woman was touched to her heart. I saw the tears come into her eyes, and I loved her for it, and she said with a cheerfulness which she did not feel: 'Never mind, Mary, I will love you and kiss you, too;' and she wiped the tears from my face and kissed me; and then there stole into my heart some dreamy memory that this was not altogether new to me, that long, long ago, somebody had treated me thus; but when and where, and who it was, I could not tell. She told me that I must often come home with her little Ellen, and promised that she would always untie my bonnet, and smooth back my hair just as she did for her own child; and she was true to her word. The pleasantest recollections of my childhood are associated with her family; and to her I am indebted for all the religious instruction I ever had. But for all this she was not, she could not be a mother to me, and although I believe she tried, whenever we were together, to make as little difference as possible in the treatment of myself and her little Ellen, yet a child's unerring instinct

told me that there was a place deep, deep down in the mother's heart, to which the little stranger could not penetrate.

"My aunt spared no expense either in my dress or education, but this was rather because I was an appendage to herself, than because she was especially interested in my personal appearance or mental culture. I was not restrained in my childish amusements, indeed I was allowed to do pretty much as I pleased, and it was this very thing that weighed like an incubus on my life, that nobody was sufficiently interested in me to care what I did, or how. I spent my time.

"Thus the years rolled on. Doubtless, the world thought my lot a very enviable one, and commented, with lavish praises, upon the rich uncle and aunt who had adopted the poor orphan, and educated her so thoroughly and dressed her so elegantly; but the world knew not of the wants and cravings of the little neglected heart, which was starved and dwarfed for want of its natural aliment, and which would gladly have exchanged handsome apparel and interesting books for loving words and fond embraces.

“I have since thought that perhaps the reason why I was allowed to be so little with my aunt, was, because I was always tormenting her with questions which she evidently did not wish to answer. When I grew old enough to reflect, I was at first surprised, and then indignant, because she always either evaded the questions entirely, or answered them in such a way as to give me no satisfaction whatever. Long before I knew that I had a right to demand from her all the information she possessed with regard to my birth and home-associations, I never entered her presence without immediately asking some question, which was sure to result in my being told in a few minutes: ‘There now, Mary, you must run out to play, my dear;’ and, I confess, that these repeated questionings, on my part, came at last to be, not the result of a hope of obtaining the desired information, but they were the outgushings of my childish revenge, because she would not tell me what I thought he had no right to withhold, and I very quickly discovered that to repeat these questions, with provoking pertinacity, was the surest way to annoy her.

"One day, when I was about fourteen years of age, I asked one of the usual questions, for which my aunt never openly reproved me, because her own sense told her how natural my curiosity was, but she always evidenced her annoyance in her tone and manner. This time, however, something had disturbed her equanimity before; so she was thrown entirely off her guard, and answered very petulantly:

"'The same old question, repeated a thousand times a week! It is wonderful that your own sense has not told you long since, that if I had any thing good or pleasant to tell you of your parents, I would, years ago, have satisfied your curiosity.'

"This was the first time she had ever openly avowed her unwillingness to speak of them; indeed, strange as it may seem, it was the very first time she had acknowledged that I ever had any parents, for the ingenuity which she displayed in seeming to answer my questions, without at all enlightening my mind, was perfectly marvellous.

"I looked up into her face in mute surprise. An impertinent reply rushed to my lips, but

found no utterance, because my aunt had never been absolutely unkind to me, and these were the harshest words she had ever spoken. I did not answer immediately, but when I did, my voice trembled with the passion which I was striving to repress.

“‘So then, aunt, I did once have a father and mother. You never told me this before.’

“I waited for an answer to this, but finding that I was not to receive one, I proceeded:

“‘Please to tell me all that you know of my mother.’

“‘I know nothing good about her,’ was the short reply.

~ “‘Are you my mother’s—’ sister I was going to say, but the word died on my lips, and I exclaimed:

“‘No, never! for if you were, you never could speak of her, no matter how she had erred, as you have spoken of my mother.’

“I then looked into my aunt’s face, firmly, but respectfully, and said:

“‘The time has come, aunt, when I may not any longer be put off with these evasions. What you have said you must explain; for, although

you have been very kind to me, and I sincerely thank you for it, yet I cannot hear these insinuations against my mother without knowing upon what they are founded.'

"'You are not grateful, Mary,' replied my aunt. 'I have been a mother to you, and have withheld the information which, for years, you have so pertinaciously demanded, simply out of regard to your feelings. Now you have asked the question in such a way that I can no longer evade it, and, because I tell you the truth about one who has really been a parent to you only in name, you are ready to forget all the kindness I have shown you, the care I have taken of you, and the money I have expended on you. I did hope that, in return for all this, I might, at least, have had a grateful, as well as an accomplished, niece, to gladden my heart when I am old.'

"This was rather more than I could bear, for I really did love my aunt and appreciate all that she had done for me, although my instinct had led me to form a very different estimate of a mother's care from that which she had bestowed on me. So I went up to her, and

laying my hand gently upon her shoulder, which was the nearest approach I had ever made to wards caressing her, I said :

“‘Indeed, my dear aunt, it grieves me very much to hear you talk so. I am not ungrateful. I think that I really do appreciate your kindness, and realize that you and uncle have done for me what very few relatives would have done for a friendless orphan child. But, aunt, you will yourself acknowledge that this longing desire to know something of my home and parents is but natural, and you will also allow that it must be painful to a child to hear her mother disparaged, even though that mother should have died long before she ever knew her.’

“My aunt seemed softened, and said, musingly: ‘Well, perhaps it may be as well to tell you all I know, but ever this will not be a great deal, for I have not heard a word from her in ten years.’

“‘Is my mother living?’ inquired I in amazement.

“‘I tell you, Mary, that I know nothing about her now.’

“‘Well,’ exclaimed I, ‘please, please, aunt, tell me all you once knew.’

“And then she told me of her elegant young brother, the pride of his family, going somewhere out into the southern wilds, and marrying a country rustic for her beauty, whom, after marriage, he was ashamed to bring home to his family. It seems, too, that there was some difficulty in my mother’s family with regard to her marriage, for my aunt said, sneeringly, that ‘her father thought her too pure or too holy for her brother, and, as there were so many objections to it, he took her away and she never saw them again.’

“‘And, aunt, did I have any brothers or sisters? How came I here if my mother was still living? Is my father still alive? Please, tell me all.’

“‘Your father brought you here,’ said my aunt, ‘a little child between three and four years old, because he wanted you to make a refined and accomplished woman, and, as your mother was not capable of thus educating you, and, as the country where he lived was in a wild, unsettled state, with no advantages of schools, so-

ciety, or even civilization, he brought you to me, for he was sure that I would rear you in a circle to which, by right of your father's birth, you belonged. I believe that there was some violent opposition on your mother's part to your being taken away; but, like a reasonable man, who looked only to his child's best interests, he, of course, disregarded it, and brought you to me in spite of opposition. Since you came here I have never received one line from your mother, and this is why I say that she is a mother only in name. She did not even write to tell us of your father's death: we heard of it accidentally a year afterwards, through a stranger. You once had brothers and sisters, but I do not know what has ever become of them. I do not know whether or not your mother is still living, though I think it most probable that she died long since, as her health was extremely delicate when your father brought you to me. Now, Mary, I have told you all I know. No questions hereafter can give you any more satisfactory information, and, as this cannot but be a painful subject to both of us, I beg that you will never again allude to it.'

"Such, Bessie," continued Mary, "is the unsatisfactory knowledge that I possess of my parents; of my home I know nothing. You see from my aunt's description of my mother that she had no respect for her, and thought it a great blessing that I should have exchanged maternal imbecility and neglect for all the care and advantages which she had given me; but, although I received all my impressions concerning my mother through the medium of her prejudices, yet I have never been able to look upon her character in the light in which my aunt would have me view it; and I feel that there is, deep in my heart, a chord which will yield no answering response to any name but mother; that I love her yet, and reverence her, too, in spite of what I have heard, and will not, cannot, believe that she was not all that a mother ought to be. You will now understand what I mean, Bessie, when I say that you are happy; happy in having known for yourself the guardian of your childhood; happy in having memories which no after life can efface; happy in your own knowledge; while I, groping in darkness, find myself constantly grasping

imaginary characteristics, of whose existence no human being can assure me."

"Yes, Mary," replied Bessie, "I see it all now, and just begin to realize that what has heretofore seemed to add a poignancy to my grief, is really my greatest blessing; and, although my knowledge of my mother only assures me how great is my loss, yet I would not, for worlds, exchange my certainty with regard to her character, for your state of doubt and want of knowledge. You said, Mary, that your aunt was, essentially, a worldly woman; who taught you about the Bible, and the Prayer Book, and the Church? who told you in your childhood about the Saviour who specially loves little children, and thinks they are best fitted, of all earthly beings, for membership in his Church? Who had you baptized, Mary?"

"Ah, Bessie! that is the saddest thought of all. I have no reason whatever to believe that I was baptized at all, until, at seventeen years of age, I sought for myself shelter in that fold in which a mother's instincts lead her to place her little infant so soon as it is born. In looking over my childhood, I feel that it was all un

sheltered, and whenever I see a little baby baptized, and hear those beautiful, those wonderful promises of protection and loving guidance, I shudder at the thought that for me, all through infancy, childhood, and early youth, there was not one such promise; that no kind friend had sought for me a pledge of a Saviour's guardian mercy and watchful care, during that period of life, which is, of all others, most exposed to snares and temptations. I have already told you that to the lady whose sympathies were aroused by my childish grief, I am indebted for all the religious instruction I received. She very soon won my confidence and affection, and asked me to join her class in the Sunday-school. This I readily agreed to do, pleased with the novelty, and anxious to go with the little Ellen, who was my favorite playmate; and every Sunday during the four following years of her brief life, she called for me to accompany her. The first real grief I ever experienced, was the Sunday morning when I had to go without my little friend, and stood sobbing by the open grave which was ready to receive her. After Ellen's death her mother seemed to cling to me, and

always treated me very affectionately, and instructed me on Sunday with a great deal of care, and she gave me a Prayer Book which I still have, and which I value very much. She was a faithful teacher in the Sunday-school, and taught our class from the age of six until we were ourselves ready to become teachers. She now sleeps quietly beside her little Ellen, but she was permitted to live long enough to see the fruits of her labors. The very last time she joined in the worship of the earthly Church she saw her whole class of six girls whom she had instructed from childhood kneeling side by side at the chancel to receive the rite of Confirmation. I never can cease to be grateful for her kind and patient instruction, and cannot help feeling that I am more indebted to her for her religious teachings, than I am to my aunt for all the worldly advantages which she so lavishly bestowed upon me. It is only since I have known you, and heard you talk, that I have realized that, after all, it was not a mother's teaching. As she only taught me one hour in the week, she had not the time to point out, step by step, the Scriptural authority for the doctrines and

usages of the Church. She did not teach me to regard the Church as a mother; oh! if she had, how would the little orphan's heart have grasped the idea, and how I would have learned to love the Church and obey her directions. The greater part of what I know of the Church, and the Bible authority for what she commands and teaches, I have learned since I have been grown; and, groping my way along an unknown path unassisted and alone, I find that I have overlooked many things which a mother's care pointed out to you, and young as you are, you have called my attention to many beauties in the Church system which I had never perceived before."

"You have never, Mary, related to your friends here what you have now told me, have you?"

"No, Bessie, I have never spoken so unreservedly to any one before, and would not thus freely have spoken to you, were it not that I have felt, from the first, irresistibly drawn towards you. It cannot be merely a tie of sympathy because we are both motherless, for I have been several times in my life intimately associated with girls in the same condition, but

have never felt any desire to open my heart to them. It must be the resemblance between myself and your mother, that has awakened in my heart this feeling towards you. It is very mysterious, this likeness, isn't it, Bessie?"

"Yes, Mary, to me it is unaccountable. You are much more like my mother in personal appearance than I am."

"I wish, Bessie, that the resemblance did not stop here. I would rather be like her in character than any human being I ever heard of."

"Yes, Mary; her character was a lovely exemplification of the power of religion. Her Saviour's will was the only law she recognized, his glory the paramount desire of her heart."

"Was she always, and in all circumstances, perfectly submissive to the will of God?" asked Mary.

"Yes," replied Bessie; "I never saw her otherwise. I have frequently heard her say, that the highest attainment which a Christian can ever reach in this world, is to be able to say, from the sincere depths of his heart: 'Father, thy will be done.' This attainment she reached long years before she went to heaven, and must

have been left here, not to be herself refined and purified for that blessed world, but to train and guide a wayward and impetuous child."

"Was she never disturbed and disquieted by anxieties and troubles, Bessie?"

"Yes, Mary; she was sometimes distressed, but never rebellious. She was a human being, and a mother, and therefore could not but be grieved to see my little sister suffer and die; but she was always perfectly submissive. She has often told me, that as it was her Father's will to take Jennie, she would not have detained her if she could. She rested in the assurance of God's love with the implicit trust of a child. She always spoke of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, as Father, Saviour, Comforter. It was her wish that her Father's will should be done in every thing; therefore she could never murmur. By a powerful and undying association, I have her countenance before me in life-like reality, whenever I hear the words of the closing benediction: 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding.' That peace was written as with a sunbeam upon her face, smiling out even in the midst of tears—the saddest tears

I ever saw her shed—over my little dead sister. Bereavement, suffering, death itself, could not efface it, or quench its light; and when I looked upon her face for the last time, and pressed a farewell kiss upon her cold brow, the thought struggled into audible utterance, and I could not help saying aloud:—

“‘The peace of God!’”

CHAPTER XI.

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, Blessed Trinity!"

HEBER.

THE Christmas holidays were over, and once more Bessie and Emma were at school, engaged in the regular routine of daily duty, and scarcely able to realize that their brief fortnight of pleasure had not been a dream. To their young minds it seemed that all that was left to them of that happy time was its pleasant memory; they did not know that impressions had been made and friendships formed which would be life-long in duration.

The whole Walton family parted with Bessie with sincere regret. The parents not professing themselves to be guided by Christian principles, could not but wonder at and admire the development of them in one so young, and could

not but rejoice at the influence which such a companion would exert over their daughter. Charles and Lucy were loud in their protestations of regret at Bessie's departure, and expressed their delighted surprise that she was always ready to join in their amusements, and had none of that moroseness which they had been accustomed to regard as inseparable from religion. Mary Seymour said less, but probably felt more severely than any of the rest, the loneliness of the house after the girls were gone. Herself a devoted Christian, she could not but love and cling to the Christian child who was the only person she had ever seen in that house who could sympathize with her, and to whom she could talk upon the subject nearest her heart. Herself an orphan from early childhood, having formed the most exalted conceptions of maternal affection and influence, though the pleasure was embittered by a more realizing sense of her own destitution, still it was a pleasure to her, to find that there had once been just such a mother as her fancy had pictured, and that her child had loved her quite as much as she imagined she herself would have loved

such a mother. As some mitigation to the pain of separation, she had exacted a promise from Bessie to correspond with her regularly. Of Emma's parents, Bessie had obtained a promise that their daughter should spend her next summer vacation with her at Mr. Kennedy's, and their plans for that future time, and their anticipations of pleasure, formed a favorite topic of conversation between the girls during the hours of relaxation from school duty.

When they were again fairly settled down to their books, they resumed their evening study of the Prayer Book. Emma was herself surprised at the rapidity of her progress, and at the firm hold taken by this book upon her affections. Being now at that age when the young mind first begins to awake to the beauties of style and language, she could not fail to appreciate in some degree, at least, the sublimity of that Liturgy which has challenged the admiration of some of the noblest minds the world ever saw; and sometimes she paused long over certain passages, and, as in the Collect for Trinity Sunday, wondered whether it were indeed possible that uninspired human intellect could

grasp such majesty of thought, and express it in such force and brevity of language.

Thus gently and quietly the weeks and months rolled on. Some might have deemed their life lonely and monotonous, but the girls did not find it so. Their retirement in the country rendered unnecessary many of those restrictions so intolerable to the young in city boarding-schools. Their teachers were kind and lenient, striving to govern by that fear and love of God, and desire to please Him, which was always held up as the only incentive to action that was worth having. The constant attendance upon Church Services, which was to some, when they first came to the school, a disagreeable necessity, soon became a matter of course, and afterwards of preference, so that the tide of affairs in that little school flowed on with a smooth, unruffled current. They were allowed plenty of time for exercising in the open air, and spent an hour every evening in the parlor, where teachers and pupils met in free, unreserved intercourse, and amused themselves in any way they chose, with no other restrictions than those which belong to refined and polite life.

Bessie saw, with feelings of unmingled pleasure, the interest that her young friend was beginning to take in the Church. Assured by Emma herself, at the commencement of their study of the Prayer Book, of her desire to be a Christian, she had never seen any thing in her conduct to awaken a doubt of her sincerity and she longed to see her placed within the fold of the Church by holy baptism. She frequently repeated her former advice, to seek counsel and instruction from Mr. Lester, but always received the reply:—

“Not yet, Bessie. You must teach me all you know first. When I have gone all through the Prayer Book with you, if I find that I can believe all these teachings and submit to all these directions; if, in short, I find that I can take this Church for my mother, to guide and instruct me, then I will go to Mr. Lester, and open my whole heart to him, and tell him all I want. But I cannot go yet. I might, after all, find something that I could not possibly believe or do, so let us wait patiently.”

“No, Emma; I cannot wait patiently. I do so long to see you confess Christ before men,

so long to see you do all you can do to show that you realize the value of the redemption purchased for you, and are not ungrateful for it."

"Bessie," replied Emma seriously, "you know that I am not ungrateful for the salvation offered me. You know that I do sincerely desire to be a Christian, and intend, by God's help, to be one; but this thing of choosing a Church is too serious and solemn a decision, too important in its results, to be made hastily and lightly. God alone knows, my dear Bessie, how thankful I would be to have my mind at rest on this point, and how I envy you your calm, sweet assurance that you are in the right fold."

"Never, never, while I live," said Bessie solemnly, "can I learn all that my mother has done for me. Every day develops some new blessing unperceived before. Oh! how can I be thankful enough that she did not leave me thus to decide for myself, to grow up uninstructed in religious truth, and then, when my conscience is awakened, and I see myself a sinner, and long to confess my Saviour in the only way He has appointed, through the Sacraments of

his Church, to stand bewildered among conflicting opinions, and fearful lest after all I might find myself in the wrong fold. I am thankful that it was not left to me to choose my Church, any more than it was to choose my mother; but that she who was so thoroughly acquainted with every step of the path, should first have placed my feet in it, and then have taken pains to show me how closely it followed the teachings of God's holy word. I cannot, Emma, bid you make haste to decide, for there is force and truth in what you say, that it is too important and solemn a decision to make hastily. I can only regret that you are so bewildered, and pray God to guide and direct you in your difficulty. But I do most sincerely wish that your decision could be made. I love you dearly, Emma, and cannot bear to think of you as unbaptized, unprotected; with all a Saviour's promises freely offered, while you stand alone and unbefriended, with no right to claim one of them, because you have not fulfilled the conditions. Think of it, my dear friend; and, though I would not have you hasty, yet I do entreat you to use faithfully all the means of instruction in your

power. Lent is now approaching; immediately after it comes Easter, the grand high-festival of the Church's year; and this is the day appointed for the bishop's visitation, and for Confirmation. You heard Mr. Lester say in school this morning, that he wanted to form a Confirmation class, to instruct all those who might desire to receive that sacred rite; now, Emma, it is your duty to join this class. You do not thereby pledge yourself to be confirmed, you only evince a disposition willing to be taught. You will not be required to expose the feelings and purposes of your heart. His instructions will be general; he will ask no questions, and exact no disclosures which you will be unwilling to make; but will tell you, with all the rest, earnestly and affectionately, what is your duty, and what character is necessary for you to come into the Church. He will tell you all, that he will be happy to see any one of you, at any time, in his study, where, alone, you can tell him your doubts and difficulties, and he can give to you the advice and counsel adapted to your case. And if you never go to him at all, he will not urge you to come, and weary

you with importunities; but will patiently wait for another and more favorable opportunity for winning your confidence, and finding an avenue by which his instructions may reach your heart."

"If this be true, Bessie, I will join the class with pleasure. I had not intended to do so, partly because I preferred to continue my study alone with you, but more particularly, because I was afraid that Mr. Lester might try to find out what is in my heart, by questions which I would not, and could not, answer in presence of others."

"I was afraid, Emma, that you had some such ideas as these of a Confirmation Class, and, therefore, I have explained to you its design and method of instruction. As to your preferring our quiet study in our own room, I have no idea of giving this up, for it is both as pleasant and as profitable to me as it is to you."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Bessie. I began to, be afraid that you might be growing tired of teaching so ignorant a scholar. And now, while it occurs to me, let me ask a question which I have been intending to ask for sev-

eral days, but I never could think of it at the proper time. In reading the Bible, is it more interesting and instructive to read each day a chapter from the Old and one from the New Testament, or to begin at Genesis and go regularly through to Revelation."

"I think, Emma, that the Church has decided that matter for you far better than I can. She has prescribed a rule for reading the Holy Scriptures, both more useful and pleasant than any other."

"And what is that, and where is it, Bessie? I never saw it."

"You will find it, Emma, where so many other things are found, in the Book of Common Prayer."

"O never, Bessie! I have read the Prayer Book, every word of it, from the Order for Daily Morning Prayer to the end of the Psalms and Hymns, and I have never seen one word as to the manner of reading the Bible."

"No doubt, Emma, you read very carefully and faithfully after you commenced, but the difficulty was that you did not begin at the beginning."

"Yes, I did, Bessie. I tell you that I commenced at the very first word."

"Well, Emma, we will see," replied Bessie, laughing, and taking up her Prayer Book, she turned to "A Table of Lessons for January." "I suppose, Emma," she said, "you have, of course, noticed the table which contains the appointed Lessons for all the Sundays throughout the year."

"I am ashamed of my ignorance, Bessie, but I must acknowledge that I never saw it. You know that Mr. Lester is the only Episcopal minister that I ever heard preach regularly, and I have noticed, with great surprise, the taste and discrimination with which he selected the lessons most appropriate to his sermons, especially on great Festival and Fast Days. I little dreamed that the Church had chosen for him both the lessons and the subject of his sermon: it is now no matter of surprise that they should harmonize so beautifully."

"Yes, Emma, the Church leaves as little as possible to the discretion of her ministers. Weak, erring, and fallible, she knows the best and wisest of them to be, and therefore she

hedges them about with every safeguard to avoid the possibility of having her children improperly taught. She provides prayers and praises which she requires to be used, selects portions of Scripture which must be read, and often in the course of the ecclesiastical year, chooses subjects which she requires to be treated of in the pulpit. Thus, on Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Whit-Sunday, and Trinity Sunday, she desires that every Episcopal pulpit throughout the world should echo with these great themes, and that all her congregations should be compelled to listen to them. But to return to what we were talking about: the directions for reading the Bible throughout the year. If you will glance your eye along this page and the several succeeding ones, you will find four lessons provided, two for the morning and two for the evening of each day of the whole year. The first of these lessons you will notice is invariably taken from the Old Testament, for although it is in the later portion of the revelation that a Saviour is fully and distinctly disclosed, yet the Church dares not depreciate any part of God's Holy Word, but fol-

lowing the example of her Lord, who always magnified and honored the Law and the Prophets, she takes care that her children shall study the Law as well as the Gospel. In this calendar you will observe, that of the books of the Old Testament, are omitted the two Books of Chronicles, because these are merely a repetition of the historical records contained in the Kings, the Song of Solomon, and the Psalms. These last, you know, are so divided in the Prayer Book as to be read once a month. Mother told me that the reason why the Prayer Book thus provides for the frequent perusal of the Psalms is, because they contain more experimental religion than any other portion of the whole Bible. In other parts of the Scriptures, religion is taught theoretically; we are told how a person ought to think and feel and act, but here we see repentance and faith in actual vigorous exercise in a man in all respects like ourselves, and in some instances a great sinner. It is an unfolding of Christian experience, of fears and anxieties strangely blended with simple and child-like trust, and this exhibition of the frames and feelings of the Christian heart, while it humili-

ates us as we see the imperfection of the very best of God's children, is at the same time a very great comfort when tempted to distrust our own sincerity and to believe that we cannot be Christians while we sin so constantly. You will notice, that in this calendar, the Book of Isaiah, instead of being read in its regular order, is appointed for the month of December, after all the rest of the Old Testament has been read. Mother said that this was because the Church has appropriated this month as the season of Advent, and as Isaiah contains more frequent and more direct prophecies of the birth of Christ than any other of the Old Testament Books, it seems peculiarly appropriate that the lessons for this season should be taken from that Book.

“Of the New Testament, the Revelation of St. John is omitted, because most of it is a grand prophetic vision of the glories of the unseen world, into whose mysterious depths no mortal mind may penetrate; and, as there is no special doctrine taught in it, and it is so full of mysteries, which rash, presumptuous mortals, ever curious to pry into the hidden things

of God, may 'wrest to their own destruction, the Church has thought best not to require a perusal of this Book at stated intervals, but to leave it rather to the option of the reader. . And yet, true to her fear lest any portion of God's Word fall into disuse, she has appointed lessons from this Book for three of the holy days of the year, and extracts from it, to be used as the Epistle for four days, one of them Trinity Sunday, one of her highest festivals.

"By following the directions of this calendar, the whole of the Old Testament will be read once, the Gospels and Acts twice, and the Epistles three times in the course of the year. You will at once perceive, Emma, the wisdom and propriety of this arrangement. Not only is it more beneficial thus to read systematically, but it is much more interesting, especially in the historical and narrative parts of the Bible. We never lose the connecting thread; and, by reading at the same time portions from each Testament, we discover that unity of design which pervades the whole, and proclaims them both to be a revelation from the same God."

"You spoke just now, Bessie," said Emma,

“of Trinity Sunday. Now, this very ‘high festival,’ as you call it, of Trinity Sunday seems to me the only superfluous service appointed by the Church. In the provision of all the other festival and fast days, I can see great wisdom, because they all bring before our minds some event in our Saviour’s life which does not stand out in bold relief at all other times. But I do think, if one thing more than another is echoed and re-echoed throughout the whole of that Liturgy, on festival and fast days, on Sundays and week days, it is the doctrine of the Trinity. The first thing after the confession of our sins, and the declaration of pardon, is an ascription of praise to the Trinity. We never chant a psalm without concluding with it. The Gloria in Excelsis and Te Deum send it up to Heaven with an exultant shout, and then again, sinking low upon our knees, we are taught to plead:

“‘God the Father; God the Son, Redeemer; God the Holy Ghost; have mercy upon us.’

“And still again, as if repetition could not weary, goes up the entreating cry:

“‘O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us.’

“We distinctly avow our belief in this doctrine in the Creed, we add to the Psalm in metre the Gloria Patri, and the last sound that falls upon our ears in the Sanctuary is a blessing pronounced in the name of the Trinity. Now, Bessie, I do not object to this; I like it, because this repetition keeps a vital doctrine always in our memory; but I think the constant teachings of the every-day service quite enough. Why devote a Sunday specially to the consideration of a doctrine distinctly held up to view ten times in each morning, and eight times in every afternoon service throughout the year?”

“For the very reason, Emma, that a careful mother never wearies of repetition, when that repetition is necessary to impress upon the mind of a thoughtless child some truth of vital importance to its well-being. How patiently does the mother teach her little child the letters of the alphabet! How does she, again and again, correct mistakes, and try by every artifice in her power to associate the name of the letter with its shape and appearance. Now, Emma, this

doctrine is the alphabet of our religion, and the Church, careful mother that she is, endeavors by every means that she can devise, to make us believe and remember it. She makes us sing it, and say it, standing and kneeling, associates it with the sweetest of her music strains, and interweaves it into her most penitent confessions. Ah, Emma! it is a glorious feature in the Church I love, that while some deny the divinity of her blessed Lord, and some resolve the personality of the Holy Ghost into a mysterious essence, whose properties and influences none can define, and others yet again believe not in any God at all, except a certain principle of life existing in all the inanimate things of nature; O! it is a glorious thought that the Church, true to her name, 'keeper and witness of the truth,' sends up daily her voice, 'yea, and that a mighty voice,' and proclaims through the lips of ten thousand of her children, 'I believe in God the Father: I believe in God the Son: I believe in God the Holy Ghost:' and yet not content with all this, she sets apart a special Sunday wherein she requires of all her ministers that they shall again reiterate this oft-

repeated truth in the ears of all the people, that they shall tell them that it is not a mere abstraction, a meaningless dogma, but a life-giving, soul-converting doctrine, one which bears immediately and directly upon the Christian life and character, one full of comfort to the child like spirit, but proclaiming wrath and judgment to the proud rejecter of its mysterious teachings. Trinity Sunday is the grand doctrinal festival of the Church. All the others commemorate simple events: our Lord's birth, his resurrection, his ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. This festival commemorates only a doctrine, the all-important one of the Trinity, the corner-stone of our belief; and all the rest of the Church's year is called Trinity-tide, and is designated by Sundays after Trinity, and all her teachings during this time seem only the echo of the great truth which is sounded in our ears on this day. Into the services for Trinity Sunday, she interweaves other explicit declarations of this truth. As its own peculiar Collect she has appointed a prayer, whose sublimity of thought and expression my mother used to say could never be surpassed, and in the Commu-

nion Service, as a proper preface to that grand Trisagion, which, in its threefold ascription of praise, itself acknowledges the Trinity, the Church has declared fully and explicitly, in language so precise that it will not allow misrepresentation, her belief in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;—their distinct personality, their perfect equality. Depend upon it, Emma, there is meaning, there is wisdom in all this; it is not vain, useless repetition."

"I declare, Bessie," replied Emma, "it is an absolute pleasure to me, this study of the Prayer Book, this search into its hidden meaning, this constant discovery of a settled, distinct purpose in all its services."

"I believe it is, Emma; and I sometimes almost envy your astonishment when you find that every thing in that service was placed there for instruction, and not merely as a form of public worship. I have studied this book from early childhood, and its unity of design and harmony of teachings have all been carefully pointed out to me, so that what strikes you as extraordinary I look upon as a matter of course while with you the pleasure of dis-

covery is greatly enhanced by its unexpectedness."

"There is one more question, Bessie, that I wish to ask, and I must do it quickly, for in a few moments the bell will call us to evening prayers. Tell me the origin and meaning of the name Whit-Sunday, another of the high-festivals. The Epistle tells me that it commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles on the Pentecostal day, but I have searched in vain through the Collect, the Lessons, and the Gospel, for something to throw light upon the meaning of the word."

"Whit-Sunday, Emma, is an abbreviation of the word White-Sunday, a name given by the ancient Church to this particular day, because all who were baptized on that day, and all who had been baptized on the preceding Easter, came to church in white garments."

"Then, Bessie, the name has nothing to do with the event which the day commemorates?"

"No, Emma, I believe not. It simply acquired its name from the ancient custom of the Church. But there is the bell; put on your bonnet, and let us go."

Emma tied on her bonnet, and as she did so said laughingly :—

“I do not feel quite so averse to the sound of that bell, as I did some months ago. Do you remember, Bessie, my exclamation of impatience when it interrupted the first little quiet conversation we ever had? I laugh, to this day, whenever I recall your expression of dismay, even although I now see, myself, how wrong it was for me to feel and speak so.”

“Indeed, Emma, I remember very distinctly what you said; and though, of course, I do not recollect my expression of countenance, I can imagine what it was, for I do well remember how much I was surprised and grieved. I little dreamed then that this thoughtless outburst of feeling would, by God’s blessing, be the means of leading you to love the Church, and that I should have the pleasure of helping you to love her.”

“And I little dreamed,” returned Emma affectionately, “that my careless, wicked speech would be the means of drawing me to the very best friend I ever had, or ever can have again; one who was wise enough and patient enough,

and loved me enough, to instruct me step by step all along this way."

"Do not speak so, Emma. Half my pleasure would be destroyed if I thought that you felt under obligations for any thing that I have been able to do for you. I have been gratifying myself; therefore you cannot be obliged."

CHAPTER XII

Hush! 'tis a holy time;
The Lenten Fast, the Church's weeping-time,
When with a sad and heavy heart she leads
Her children to a dying Saviour's cross,
And bids them look, and whispers in their ear:
"This, all of this for *you*!"

THE weeks rolled by, and Ash-Wednesday, which ushers in the great fast of the Church, had dawned. Quietly and reverently Mr. Lester and all his scholars had, on the Purification day, removed from their little chapel its Christmas dress, and now in the calm of evening twilight, when they were assembled there for prayers, he had told them, in few and solemn words, the design and uses of this Lenten season."

Emma had followed her friend's advice, and had gone regularly to Mr. Lester's Confirmation class, and felt that she had been benefited by his counsels and instructions. He read by her countenance that she was deeply interest-

ed; he often saw the struggle to keep back the tears and conceal her feelings, when he touched some tender chord in her heart, yet he said not a word to her individually; but wisely determined to wait, satisfied that it would not be long before she would voluntarily come to seek his counsel. He trusted greatly, too, to the season, with its holy influences and employments, to deepen and intensify the feelings which he saw struggling into life in other young hearts beside Emma's.

It was the first Lenten season she had ever known. To Bessie every thing was perfectly familiar; but while she loved and enjoyed its solemn services, and a calm, sweet peace pervaded her heart, there was upon Emma's countenance, all the while, an expression almost of awe, which plainly told that she was not at rest within. There was a solemn air which seemed to surround every thing. The girls did not wear gloomy faces, and deny themselves every recreation, but their cheerfulness was subdued, and they seemed, all the time, to realize that it was a holy season, a long six-weeks sabbath, towards the close of which they would be allowed, with

stilled hearts and hushed voices, to draw very near to their suffering and dying Saviour, to stand beneath the shadow of his cross, and, finally, to look with the broken-hearted women upon his lonely sepulchre.

Twice each week, at the sunset hour, Mr. Lester lectured to his little congregation, of which his pupils formed the larger proportion. Each one of these was known to him, personally and intimately, each one bound to him by the double tie of pastor and teacher; for the soul of each one he must one day give account at the bar of God; and, as he looked at his senior class, of whom Bessie was one, five girls, of whom she alone had confessed Christ before men; and as he remembered that it was the last Lenten season which they would ever spend with him—that before it should come again they would all be launched out into the great world, and some perhaps would be in the spirit-land—he redoubled his exertions and his prayers, that God would bless his efforts to win those young souls for his service, and that they might come up an unbroken band to the Easter feast.

Mr. Lester was not what the world calls a

talented or eloquent man; he was simply an earnest-minded Christian. He believed that human intellect could not add any interest to the last touching scenes in our Saviour's life, and that it needed no epithets of his to impress their reality upon the minds of his young hearers. And so, week after week, when the duties of the day were over, and the sun was quietly sinking to his rest—with few words and simple language he would bring before their minds some scene of suffering or ignominy borne by our Saviour—until gay and happy hearts were melted into sympathy and tears.

It was always Mr. Lester's custom, in his school, during the first three weeks of Lent, to assemble his scholars twice a week at the chapel, for the purpose of practising the special music for Good Friday, and, during the last three weeks, that for Easter. This was peculiarly necessary, as the organ was played by one of the girls, and as none of them were skilful musicians, it required some time and practice to enable them to play and sing in such a way as becomes the worship of God Most High. He had no choir in his church, the organ was on

the floor, and all the children were required to sing.

The evening service was over. The lecture had been upon that peace which our Saviour promised to leave as a legacy to his orphaned disciples, in the last familiar interview with them before he suffered; an interview whose every word of tenderness and compassion has been so faithfully recorded by the loving disciple. According to request, the girls lingered after service to practice, and, after rising from their knees, they silently gathered around the organ. Not a word was spoken, for all were solemnized, and they waited for Mr. Lester to tell them what to do. He bade them turn to the Eloi, a sad, touching strain of music, sung in some of our churches as an appropriate introduction to the solemn Good Friday service, and adapted to those words of the inspired record: "There was darkness over all the earth, and the vail of the temple was rent. At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The shades of evening were fast deepening into darkness, and there was barely light enough

struggling through the stained windows to enable the girls to read the words. Sweetly in unison with the quiet hour, the gathering darkness, rose the mournful strain of music,

“There was darkness over all the earth.”

Most of the girls were familiar with it, but Emma had never heard it before. She had come to listen and to learn, but she heard not its rich harmony; she knew nothing, felt nothing, except that there was a low, wailing strain breaking her very heart, and stealing away unobserved, she seated herself in a remote corner of the church and wept bitterly. The heart bowed and yielded then. The “loud, loud voice” of a dying Saviour penetrated the very depths of her soul, and she felt that she could not stay longer away from Him from whose lips her sins had extorted that bitter cry.

Bessie had looked in vain for her friend when they were all ready to leave the church. She had returned to her own room, and was sitting alone in the dim twilight when Emma entered. She was, evidently, much excited, and her voice trembled as she said:

"I have been, at last, Bessie, to Mr. Lester, and have told him all my wants, and fears, and doubts. He says that the Saviour will not reject me, and his Church dares not do it, if she could. He encourages me to come, and I will. I cannot, cannot any longer stay away."

Bessie said not a word, but clasping Emma in a tight embrace, she laid her head upon her shoulder, and yielding to her impulsive nature, wept plenteous tears of gratitude and thanksgiving. Presently she said, "When will you come, dear Emma? Do not delay any longer."

"I wanted Mr. Lester, Bessie, to baptize me to-morrow, but he will not consent. He says that I must first write home to my parents and ask their advice and permission. I regret the delay very much, but he says this is right and proper, that I would be violating the very first duty of a Christian child if I should neglect it, and God's blessing would not rest upon the act."

"Mr. Lester is right, Emma," said Bessie; "but you have no idea that your parents will object to the step you are about to take, have you?"

“No, Bessie, they will not object, but I am afraid that they will not think I am acting from any deep settled purpose. They will not place any obstacle in my way, simply because they indulge me in every thing. I shall write immediately, and if they are prompt in replying, the letter may reach me by Saturday, and I can then be baptized on Sunday morning. Mr. Lester says I must have at least one witness; the Church prefers more, but you and Mary Seymour, are the only persons in the world that I could ask to do this, as my parents are not professed Christians. As Mary cannot be here, Mr. Lester says that he will be satisfied with you alone. But I had forgotten that I had not yet asked you. You will be my witness, Bessie, will you not?”

“With the greatest pleasure, my dearest Emma. How eagerly I shall look forward to next Sunday. I am almost afraid that in my earnest anticipations, I shall be tempted to forget present duty.”

Emma clasped Bessie in a warm embrace, and with tearful eyes and quivering lips, said:

“God bless you for it all, Bessie. You have

interested me, instructed me, led me; taught me to love first the Saviour himself and then his Church. But for you, I know not that a Baptismal Sunday would ever have dawned upon me."

Emma went to her room and wrote a letter to her parents, telling with childlike simplicity all her desires, and striving, without any boasting, to convince them that she was not acting from caprice, or hasty impulse, or from persuasion, but calmly, deliberately, and of her own free-will. She received, by return mail, two letters; one from her parents, yielding without an objection to her wish, merely because it was her wish, and as she folded it again and laid it by, she could not but feel a sense of desolation, to think that it contained in this, the most important act of her life, not one word of sympathy or encouragement, no God-speed on this her untried journey. An oppressive sense of loneliness overpowered her; she felt as if a line of separation had been drawn between herself and those dearest to her heart; as if she, a dependent child, had voluntarily left the parental side, and adventured herself upon an

unknown sea, where she might no longer look for advice and guidance from those she loved so well. This may seem a light trial to some, but Emma did not find it so. Loving her parents devotedly, she realized that here, in the very outset of her Christian life, there was a cross to bear. Unhesitatingly, however, and unwaveringly, she took it up. Duty now clearly pointed out her course, and she felt that she could not rest until she had assumed the Baptismal vows, and had received in return a Saviour's promises, and more eagerly even than Bessie she anticipated the approach of Sunday.

The other letter was from Mary Seymour, full of Christian sympathy, of warm affection, and sincere pleasure at her decision. Emma sorely felt the need of words of encouragement, and they were, indeed, refreshing to her; but yet she laid down the letter with a sigh, as she remembered that all this must henceforward come from a stranger, rather than from those upon whom the ties of nature had given her a stronger and a higher claim.

In his conversations with Emma, Mr. Lester was delighted with the spirit which she mani-

fested. She soon learned to cast aside that shrinking reserve which had, for so long a time, raised a barrier between herself and her minister. She found that he listened kindly and attentively to all she had to say, that he could, and did, sympathize with her, because he had once been precisely in her present condition, and had himself experienced all her feelings. Knowing that her parents had never instructed her, he was surprised to find how clear were her views of religious obligation, and, remembering that she had come there, not many months before, entirely unacquainted with the usages of the Church, he was astonished to find how thoroughly acquainted she was with the Prayer Book, and how deeply imbued her heart was with love and reverence for its teachings. But when he learned that all this was the result of a child's instruction; that the sad-looking orphan who had lately come into his school had brought with her such a wealth of religious knowledge, and such weight of influence, he could not but realize that "God had, indeed, chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"

Sunday morning dawned bright and cloudless. It was a day of peculiar interest in that school. The religious feeling that had been awakened was growing deeper and more intense; four weeks of the sacred Lenten season had passed away, and Mr. Lester's heart swelled with gratitude at the thought that its solemn services had left a holy impress upon every heart; that, in the souls of the eight professed Christians among that little band, a deeper fervor had been excited; while, of the remaining twelve, there was not one of whom he did not entertain strong hopes that she would, at the approaching Easter, give an outward, formal expression to the desires and purposes of her heart by a union with the Church.

Reverently and solemnly, realizing fully what she was doing, and honestly purposing, by God's help, to fulfil the promises which she then made, Emma assumed her Baptismal vows. And as she promised to "continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto her life's end," and as the pledge of the covenant was signed upon her brow, witnessing friends on earth uttered their hearty "Amen." Angels in Heaven rejoiced

over the returning child, while a merciful Saviour looked with loving approbation upon the young heart consecrating to Him its earliest affections. And Bessie wondered if it might not be permitted to her mother to look from her spirit-home upon that solemn scene, and to utter a higher note of praise at the thought, that this blessed result might all be traced to the quiet home-teachings which made up the employment of her earthly life.

The service was over. The little congregation had quietly dispersed, and Emma went to her own room, and on her bended knees, asked her Heavenly Father to assist her to be faithful; always to make her remember that if she failed to receive the promises which had that day been made in his name, the fault must be in her own negligence in fulfilling her covenant engagements. She then went into Bessie's room, and throwing herself upon the floor close beside her friend, and laying her head in Bessie's lap, her pent-up feelings found relief, and like a little child she wept, but they were soothing not bitter tears; and yet her heart was not, even now, altogether at rest. The long con-

flict was over; she had done what she believed to be right, and what she would not for worlds have undone; but it seemed as if she now began, for the first time, fully to realize what comprehensive promises she had made, and how unable she was to fulfil them, and, in the very commencement of her journey, she was tempted to sit down by the way-side, in utter dismay at her own inability to contend against the difficulties of the way. At last she said:

“Oh, Bessie! I am afraid that I have promised too much, so much, so very much more than I can ever perform. Those vows, how they ring in my ears! how shall I ever entirely fulfil them?”

“You will fulfil them best, my dear Emma, by never losing sight of the fact, that you did not assume them in your own strength. The Church ever cultivates in her children a spirit of self-distrust, and teaches them to promise nothing except by God’s help. Hence, in the Baptismal Office, the candidate is always taught modestly to say, ‘I will by God’s help;’ and in the Ordination Office, ‘I trust so,’ ‘I think so,’ ‘I will do so by the help of God.’ Every thing

like presumption, or self-sufficiency, the Church utterly discountenances. In the answers put into your mouth, she has herself taught you where to look for assistance; and the promises, whose comprehensiveness and solemnity might well startle you, if undertaken in your own strength, will not be difficult to perform in the strength of Him 'who hath made Heaven and earth.' This lesson of mingled self-distrust and perfect confidence in God, she even interweaves into one of the hymns for Confirmation, and after repeating it with the lips in the responses, and uttering it with the heart in the prayers, she makes her children sing;

'We trust not in our native strength
But on his grace rely.'

Can you not, dear Emma, sometimes look away from yourself, your infirmities, and sins, and fix your eyes upon Him 'who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think?'"

"Perhaps I can, Bessie; at least I can try. Is it strange, is it wrong, that I should, just here, at the very commencement of my Chris-

tian course, think so much of my own weakness and so little of my Saviour's all-sufficiency?"

"Not at all, Emma; indeed it seems to me the most natural thing in the world. Our Saviour designs us to look much at ourselves and our weakness, in order that we may more fully lean upon Him, but He does not desire us to keep our eyes so constantly fastened upon ourselves as to make us sad and desponding. The little child, while its mother leads it, walks confidently and delightedly, but when she leaves it alone, trembling and tottering it seeks to regain the sustaining hand. Just such little children must we ever be, if we wish to walk securely and happily in the Christian course, clinging to a Saviour's guiding hand, or, as the Psalmist expresses it, 'holding us fast by God.' Do not be in too much of a hurry, Emma, to have all those frames and feelings which you imagine a Christian ought to have. God works in matters of religion as He does in the natural world, by degrees, and you must not doubt your sincerity or your ability to be a sincere Christian because you do not, just now, feel as you think you ought to do. Your feelings and purposes, your

whole mind, and heart, and body, too, have been in a state of great excitement for several days, and you must wait a little while until the equilibrium is restored, and you are brought again into your usual state of calmness, and then you will begin to experience that sweet peace which the Saviour gives to the heart which has just surrendered: that sense of rest and security so precious to the soul, tempest-tossed as yours has been, upon the waves of indecision and doubt."

"Thank you, dear Bessie," replied Emma. "Your mother taught you to comfort as well as to instruct. I will wait patiently, and will, in all things, try to do as you tell me. You have led me into the Church, and one would think that I might hereafter get along without any human help; but I am so blind and ignorant, that I am afraid I shall overlook many advantages, and fail to enjoy many pleasures which are right in my way, and which I shall need some one to point out to me. Your office is not done yet, Bessie. As long as we are together, you will have to be the teacher and I a learner of "the first principles."

CHAPTER XIII.

Tread softly! 'tis the room
Where sleeps the sick and dying. Hush each noise,
And let no words be heard save those which fall
From Mother Church's lips, those loving words
With which she comes to comfort and to soothe
Her sick and dying child!

It was Thursday night of Passion Week, a calm, pure, holy night, whose quiet air trembled with the subdued sound of the solemn service, of psalm and prayer, and lesson, when Mr. Lester and his scholars were assembled in their little chapel. The shadows of the approaching Crucifixion Day had already settled on every heart, and yet their gloomy sadness was sweetly softened by a glow of holy pleasure, somewhat akin to the Easter rejoicings, as the whole school, an unbroken band, came up to celebrate on this, the night of its institution, the Holy Communion. To that sacred feast, more than half of them had come for the first time; and

as Mr. Lester looked upon his little flock, his heart overflowed with thanksgiving, and he had a sweet foretaste of his Easter joy.

But there were two of the scholars who were not there, the two, who, perhaps of all others, had looked forward with most eagerness to this night.

A shaded lamp cast a feeble light upon the objects in Emma's room, and Bessie moved noiselessly about, afraid lest she might disturb the repose of her sick friend. But no such precaution was necessary, for Emma was in a sleep so profound, that nothing could disturb her. She had complained, the day before, of a strange confused sensation in her head, and after a night of feverish restlessness had fallen asleep in the morning, and had not awakened since. Late in the afternoon, Mr. Lester had become anxious, and had written to her parents, and Bessie alarmed, she scarcely knew why, had stayed from church to watch by her bedside. The hours seemed long and tedious to her, while the others were all at service. The church was just opposite Emma's room, and Bessie could see through the open windows, and almost hear

the words as they were spoken, and if her mind had been at rest she could have followed the service throughout. But she was now too anxious to do any thing except, with quiet step to pace the floor, and every time she passed the bed, to stop and gaze earnestly upon Emma's face, if perchance she might see something to relieve her mind of its distressing fears. But there was no change; her hair was thrown from her face, and in its full luxuriance, covered her pillow, her cheek rested upon her hand, not a muscle moved, and but for her deep regular breathing, Bessie might easily have imagined that Emma was dead. Strangely familiar with death for one so young, Bessie now wondered if it could be, that it was again about to visit her, and to sunder a tie well-nigh as strong and holy as that which had bound her to her sister. In doubt and fear, and hope and dread, the hours passed wearily enough, and it was with a feeling of inexpressible relief that she heard returning footsteps, and recognized Mr. Lester's voice as he approached the room. He looked at Emma with a distressed and anxious face, sent off again for the physician, who came

immediately, and used every expedient to arouse her, but in vain. He asked when her parents could reach them, and Bessie noted with a thrill of agony, the gloomy shake of the head with which he received the reply: "Certainly not before Saturday."

Through the long and weary hours of that night Bessie and one of her young companions watched beside Emma. It was a lonely vigil, for they had nothing to do for her, they could only sit and look at her, and wonder and dread the result. She slept on in deep, calm, unbroken slumber, and when the bright beams of the morning sun streamed through the window, and rested upon her face, they could not penetrate the thick darkness of her utter unconsciousness, but still she slept.

A sad, sad day was that Good Friday in Mr. Lester's school. Bessie could not be persuaded to leave her friend to take any rest, and, as there was nothing to do except to sit beside her, she insisted that all the others should attend service.

The last stroke of the clock, as it pealed the hour of nine, just died away on the air, as Mr.

Lester began to read the Morning Service, and, after this was finished, he spoke a few minutes from the text, "It was the third hour and they crucified Him." It needed no imagery of his, no powerfully wrought description to bring before the minds of his hearers a scene so minutely described in the Gospel for the day, and impressed upon them by every accompanying circumstance, even by the hour selected for the service, that same third hour in which our Saviour was nailed upon the Cross.

Again in the afternoon the congregation was assembled. Bessie sat in her place by the bedside and clasped Emma's hand, but no responsive pressure was returned, and still and passive it lay in her grasp. She looked through the open window upon the landscape just wearing its spring apparel, with its beauty subdued, as it were, by the solemn stillness which reigned everywhere, and which seemed in unison with the holy recollections of the day. Every thing was so very still, that Bessie involuntarily startled as the deep tone of the clock was heard. It struck three, and as its vibrations trembled in the distance, and then gradually sunk to rest a

voice in the chapel took up the wail of the Eloi, and softly and sweetly floated upon the breeze the strain, "At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud, loud voice."

Bessie felt a slight movement of the hand which she grasped, and turning hastily, she saw Emma's eyes wide open, but staring with a wild, startled expression, as if striving to collect her thoughts and to realize where she was. The strain went on, and its low, solemn dirge penetrated the heart and mind which had been so long dead to the sights and sounds of earth. The troubled, confused expression passed away in an instant, a gleam of delighted recognition lighted up her countenance, and when the last strain was borne to her ears, starting up, she clasped her hands, and, in a low, tremulous, but clear and sweet voice, she sang,

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

She sank back upon her pillow, exhausted, but not to sleep. The strain which told of the Saviour's death-agony, recalled her to life and consciousness, and all through the service she lay like one entranced, listening in calm repose

to the music which now and then floated to her ear, and to the words of prayer which she occasionally distinctly heard. Her eyes were closed, and Bessie thought she slept, but when the sound of returning footsteps assured her that the services were all over, she called Bessie's name. In an instant Bessie was bending over her, and listening to the feeble voice which said :

"What is to-day, Bessie? I thought just now that I heard Good Friday music."

"And so you did, Emma. This is Good Friday, and they are just returning from the Evening Service."

"Why, Bessie, how long I must have been asleep? I thought yesterday was Wednesday."

"No, Emma. You have been asleep since Wednesday night. You are very sick, and must not talk any more. It is very necessary that you should be quiet."

"Is Mr. Lester here, Bessie?"

"Yes; he and the girls have just come from the chapel."

"Please ask him to come here, Bessie."

Bessie did as she was requested, and Mr. Les-

ter came immediately into the room. As he approached the bed-side, Emma said :

“Mr. Lester, Bessie tells me that to-day is Good Friday. I have longed for this day to come, and, as I have not enjoyed its services, perhaps, if you are not too tired, you will read the Visitation Office for me.”

“I would with the greatest pleasure, Emma, if I dared. You have been very ill, and nothing now will insure your recovery except the most perfect quiet. I dare not do any thing that will excite you.”

“Indeed, Mr. Lester, it will soothe rather than excite me. When I was well and strong I loved to read that Office, and now that I feel so sick and weak, its holy words will be very comforting. Must I be the only one, of all the girls, to whom this sacred day has brought neither comfort nor instruction? Please do, Mr. Lester.”

He could not resist her entreaties, for, even while he feared to assume any responsibility in her case, yet, in his heart, he felt assured that there was nothing in the Visitation Office which might not enter the chamber of severest sickness, and so, taking up a Prayer Book, he pro-

ceeded at once to gratify her, deeming it best to have no other person in the room except Bessie.

Emma opposed this arrangement. She said :

“Mr. Lester, please to bring the girls in. I can read in your countenance and Bessie’s, and my own feelings tell me, that I have been very ill, perhaps on the verge of the grave, and it will be a solemn service to all my companions. Tell them not to speak to me when they come in ; I am too sick to talk, but I want to have them all in the room.”

Mr. Lester, without an objection, arranged it all according to her wishes, and soon the girls were silently assembled in that sick chamber, which was to be for the time being changed by the holy words of prayer and praise into a little sanctuary, and with their young companion stricken down in a moment before their eyes, and brought in a few hours from perfect health to the very borders of the grave, the Visitation Office proved to those girls the most impressive of Good Friday Services. After the “Thanksgiving for the beginning of a recovery,” Mr Lester laid his hand upon Emma’s head and

pronounced over her the Benediction, which she had herself noticed as being so peculiarly appropriate to the sick and suffering; and as he did so, her appearance of calm repose assured him that she had been right in her belief that the service would soothe and not excite her.

Bessie never left her friend for a moment, until she surrendered her to the care of her parents who arrived on Saturday, and were greatly shocked to see the fearful change which this short illness had wrought in the appearance of their blooming daughter. When they learned how tenderly and constantly Bessie had nursed her, and when they saw in her appearance the traces of sleepless nights and anxious days, they felt that words were altogether too poor to express their gratitude. Emma, too, seemed to lament that circumstances so ordered it, that Bessie was always doing something for her, while no opportunity was ever afforded her for doing any thing for Bessie.

"Never mind, Emma," said Bessie, as she bade her friend good-bye, the morning that her parents took her home with them; "the time will come when you can do me a favor."

"Name it, Bessie," replied Emma, warmly, "and no matter what it is, I will do it with the greatest pleasure."

"Well then, Emma, promise me again that you will spend the summer vacation with me, and do not allow any thing but a really formidable obstacle to prevent your fulfilment of the promise."

"That I will, Bessie, and if this is the way in which I am to return all your kindness, you have chosen for me a singularly pleasant one. I almost hoped that you would ask something which would require a sacrifice on my part."

"Good-bye, Bessie," said Mr. Walton, as he grasped her affectionately by the hand, "God bless you for all your kindness to my daughter. If I live and she lives, she shall pay you that promised visit, for I will myself bring her and give her into your own hands."

And they drove off and left Bessie lonely, indeed, without her young friend, but sincerely thankful that a merciful God had spared her the pain of that life-long separation, which had a few days before seemed so inevitable.

CHAPTER XIV.

Forbid not,
Heathen though I be, the pure baptismal stream
To bathe my brow. What more dost thou demand?
For I believe and pray!

THREE days had passed away since Willie Kennedy's schemes of philanthropy had been so unexpectedly blighted, and he had become somewhat accustomed to the disappointment which, at first, he had found so hard to bear. It was almost sunset as he strolled down to the wood in whose depths his Indian friend had disappeared, and opening a long letter, received that morning from Bessie, he began to give it another perusal. This letter gave him peculiar pleasure, for it had come after a long interval, during which he had tortured himself with conjectures as to the probable cause of her silence, and it was written as she always wrote to him, freely, and without reserve. Willie had never

malyzed his feelings for Bessie. The idea of marriage had never occurred to his mind in connection with her, and yet the thought of her mingled in all his plans and lighted up all his future. He knew that he was warmly attached to her, but he had never inquired of himself whether that attachment was not principally made up of the elements of sympathy and compassion for her lonely and desolate condition.

He was in a deep reverie, with the open letter in his hand, when a stealthy step approached him unheeded, and he started as two hands fell suddenly upon his shoulders, and his look of amazement, as he turned hastily round, extorted from his Indian friend a merry laugh utterly inconsistent with the imperturbable gravity of his race. Willie's first impulse was to shake him cordially by the hand, and welcome him back in words which if his friend could not understand, he could, at least, plainly read the pleasure written on Willie's countenance. The return seemed a mutual delight. The Indian signed that the three revolutions of the sun, which he had intimated as the period of his absence, had been fulfilled, and he contrived to make Willie

understand that he hoped he would hereafter trust more willingly to his veracity. He opened a bundle which contained a scanty wardrobe, unrolled one article after another, until, securely placed in the very centre, he unfolded two little books so much alike that it was impossible to distinguish them, and one of these he handed to Willie, who immediately recognized the Prayer Book whose loss he had so much deplored. Hastily seizing the other book, he minutely compared them, but there was no distinguishable difference. He turned over the leaves, and saw many marks which seemed to have been made years before, but there was nothing to indicate whence it came or to whom it had belonged except the initials "J. H.," faded and yellow with age. Again Willie's intense curiosity forgot the barrier of silence interposed between them, and, in his eagerness, he screamed into the Indian's ear, "whose is it? where did you get it?" but a shake of the head was his only reply. Again he resorted to the book, and carefully turned the leaves one by one, hoping to find some mark which would give a little insight to the mystery, but no trace of any letter

could he find, except those two which were written on the inside of the cover, all the blank leaves being torn out. He tried to inquire by signs how that book came into his possession, but could not even understand from the gestures in reply whether his question had been comprehended. Baffled and perplexed on every side, he hastily concluded that the disappointment to which he had been subjected was greatly preferable to this unsatisfactory intercourse, and was, for the moment, tempted to be sorry that the Indian had returned at all. The shadows were fast deepening, and Willie expected every moment that his friend would leave him again, but he had no such intention, and when Willie began to retrace his steps to the school, he went with him. Great was the amazement of both teacher and pupils at his return, and, although new difficulties seemed momentarily to present themselves in the way of intercourse, and discouragements, unnoticed in the first enthusiasm of his undertaking, now began to appear, yet it was with somewhat of a feeling of triumph that Willie escorted his friend back again into the midst of those who had smiled in derision

at his Utopian schemes, and had enjoyed his disappointment when those schemes had been so suddenly overthrown. The Indian went immediately to Willie's room, and settled himself there as if he intended to occupy it, took out his few clothes and disposed them around the walls of the room, and made himself perfectly at home.

As the weeks rolled by, and Willie resolutely and patiently continued his task by teaching his companion, he was frequently tempted to give up in utter discouragement. So earnestly he toiled, and so many expedients he devised, with so small success, that he almost despaired, and was fast becoming of the opinion of his teacher and school-fellows, that his undertaking was very visionary. But, notwithstanding his slow progress, he determined to make the experiment fully and fairly, and never to give up his efforts until every means had been exhausted; and, with but little sympathy, and no assistance, he worked on, battling against many hindrances and obstacles.

Two months had passed away, and the whole result of his labors was only this, that his pup'l

could call the names of the common objects of sight and sense, and could make known his ordinary wants; but every effort to convey to his mind any abstract truth had been wholly unsuccessful. He attended the chapel services regularly, and frequently spent an hour in the recitation room, and really seemed to strain ear and mind to catch the meaning of what he heard, but, thus far, it had all been in vain. Willie had all along been animated by the hope that the constant reiteration of the English language might, at last, awaken that knowledge of it which he was sure he once possessed; but, as week after week passed away, and he did not take the expected leap into a thorough acquaintance with it, the hope had almost become extinct.

From his mother and Bessie, Willie received more sympathy than from any others, and, but for their letters of encouragement, he might at last have given up in despair. While others spoke of the obstacles to be overcome, the uncertainty, the impossibility, Bessie's impetuosity saw not, thought not of these. She overleaped all that intervened between present difficulties

and ultimate success, and saw a young heathen savage transformed into a civilized and christianized man through Willie's instrumentality alone. Mrs. Kennedy, though not quite so sanguine as Bessie, yet thought it best to sustain his hopes, and so she even wrote to bid him God-speed, and to urge him to fresh endeavors. In one of his letters to Bessie he had spoken of the probable necessity of one day asking assistance for the education of his friend, but said that, until the success of his scheme was placed beyond a doubt, he thought it best not to make any effort of this kind. This was enough for Bessie. Without asking the advice of any one, she at once interested the school-girls in the story, a sewing society was immediately organized, and was in full operation, before it ever occurred to any of them to ask what was to be done with their work after it was completed, for as they were in the country they could not find purchasers. But Bessie was not to be baffled by this obstacle. She wrote to Mrs. Walton and requested her advice and co-operation, asking if she would not undertake to dispose of their work in the city, if they would do it very

neatly. Glad of an opportunity to gratify her, Mrs. Walton returned a very kind answer, entering into all her plans, advising what work should be done, promising to dispose of every article advantageously, and enclosing a fifty dollar note from her husband, as a beginning of the fund, and hoping that its growth would exceed their most sanguine expectations. With this letter came one from Emma, full of curious inquiries about this Indian youth, and romantic imaginings as to the mystery of his early education, and with a burst of generous enthusiasm, worthy of Bessie herself, promising to interest her friends in him, and to get "plenty of money" to educate Willie's heathen friend. Thus encouraged, the girls worked faithfully and industriously. The portion of each of Willie's letters containing any account of his pupil's progress, was duly read to the assembled society, and Mr. Lester's school was excited to quite a furor of enthusiasm before Willie had ever decided, in his own mind, that it was possible to educate him. Bessie wanted some name beside "the Indian," by which to designate him, and Then she wrote to Willie about it, he replied

by requesting her to select one herself. She desired that he might be called Herbert, after her mother's maiden name, and when Willie assented to this, she thought that she could work more cheerfully and earnestly for him, since there was some association of her mother connected with him.

The mild and genial glow of spring had deepened into the intenser fervor of summer, and the boys were beginning to think and talk of their return home for the long summer vacation. Herbert (for by this name alone the Indian was now called) could now perfectly understand short sentences when spoken slowly, and was beginning to try to carry on a connected conversation. He was thoroughly domesticated at the school. Both teacher and scholars treated him always kindly; indeed, he was himself so gentle and inoffensive, that they could not be otherwise than kind to him. He seemed every day to be gaining some new ideas, and Willie began to see some of the first-fruits of his self-denial and toil; and as the prospect brightened, others among the boys tried to teach him, and when once the avenues to his compre-

hension were fairly open, it seemed that Willie's patient efforts were in a fair way to be crowned with ultimate success.

Just at the close of the session, one of the boys was baptized, and Herbert witnessed, for the first time, this impressive rite. During chapel services, he always listened with eye and ear, and it was touching to observe how his whole mind and body seemed to be strained in anxiety to understand every thing, and in apprehension lest something might be lost. His voice was always heard in the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, but the words, though thoroughly English in their pronounciation, without the slightest foreign accent, were spoken just as imperfectly as a little child would speak them when first learning to talk. At this Baptismal Service, his whole soul seemed as usual intent upon understanding the meaning of what he saw. He rose with the congregation, but when they seated themselves he was totally abstracted, and stood leaning forward in an attitude of the most intense eagerness. His countenance wore a confused, troubled expression, as if it were all new and strange; something whose meaning and de

sign he could not grasp. But at the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," a light seemed to break in upon his soul, and beam forth from his eyes, and some chord was touched which proved the key-note to a long-forgotten strain. To leave the place where he was standing, rapidly to go to the chancel and place himself side by side with the candidate, was the work of an instant, and he stood there, and with breathless interest watched the remainder of the service.

After it was all over, he quietly detained Willie until all were gone and they were left alone in the chapel; then, leading him to the font, he motioned that he, too, wanted to be baptized and signed with the sign of the Cross. Willie was amazed and distressed, for he greatly feared that he never could make him understand why his desire could not be immediately gratified. He told him as plainly as he could, that he did not understand the meaning of what he saw, that he must first learn and believe certain things before this rite could be of any benefit to him. Herbert perfectly understood him, and, looking him full in the face, he laid his hand

upon his heart, which was always the sign to indicate very great sincerity and earnestness, and, in a voice whose solemnity Willie had never heard equalled, he repeated the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Then he touched the water, applied it to his forehead, and, looking at his friend with an expression of anxious pleading which went to Willie's heart, he said only two words: "Why not?" Willie asked him to go with him to see his teacher, hoping that he might be able, more satisfactorily than himself, to explain to Herbert why he could not yet be admitted to this sacrament. Herbert went with him; but to every objection urged by the teacher he only replied with a most emphatic repetition of his request. He seemed determined to carry his point, and that, too, not by unyielding pertinacity, but by looks and gestures, with now and then a word of earnest entreaty, which the teacher, as well as Willie, found it very hard to resist. At length, Willie told him that he should go home with him in the vacation, and that his father would patiently explain to him what was necessary for him to be baptized, and, if it were right, would himself baptize him. With this

promise Herbert was obliged to be satisfied, although he was sadly disappointed, and looked distressed for days afterwards.

Willie had before determined that, if it were practicable, he would take Herbert home with him to spend the vacation. He thought that this would be advisable for many considerations. He needed his father's sound, deliberate judgment to counterbalance his enthusiasm; and he was not wrong in supposing that Mr. Kennedy's practical sense would be eminently useful in devising ways and means for the accomplishment of his plans. He wanted his father to become acquainted with Herbert, that he might form his own opinion of his character and capacity, and, besides all this, he knew that there is nothing like personal contact in arousing sympathy, and, as he expected to derive the means of educating the young Indian from his father's parishioners, he was particularly anxious that they should see and know him. Herbert received the proposition to accompany Willie home with stoical indifference. Unaccustomed to the usages of civilized life, he did not appreciate it as a special compliment, but rather looked upon it,

as a matter of course, that where Willie went he, too, should follow.

Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy received him with every mark of kindness, and were, perhaps, more careful of his comfort than they would have been if he had been a more distinguished guest. Utterly unused to seeing a female occupy the place in the social circle which Mrs. Kennedy held, and perceiving the deference and respect always paid to her opinions and wishes, he was at first amazed, and then began to regard her with a feeling of reverence, and when he saw her so constant in her attentions to himself, and so anxious to make him comfortable and happy, his gratitude and affection were awakened, and were manifested in a manner very unusual in one of his undemonstrative race. He followed her all day long, even when about her domestic concerns, and she did not object to it, for her woman's tact at once perceived what a hold she had upon him, and how she might influence him. She talked a great deal to him in the simplest language about the great truths of our religion, and the kindling of his eye testified that he knew more of these things than she

thought he could possibly have learned during the few months of his intercourse with Willie. She encouraged him to talk, and led him on so gently and persuasively, that she and all the family were surprised at his perceptible progress in a few weeks. Mr. Kennedy was decidedly of the opinion that he should be sent to one of the mission schools, and Willie wondered that he had not thought of this before. The proposition was laid before Herbert, and it was explained to him that this would be greatly to his advantage. He shook his head doubtfully at first, then wanted to know if Willie would go, too, and when answered in the negative, to the surprise of every one, he gave a decided and most unequivocal refusal. Willie and his father were worried, but Mrs. Kennedy begged that they would not be impatient, but wait until she had tried her persuasive powers, and after a few days she succeeded, as she had predicted, in gaining his consent, and it was arranged that when Willie went to the Theological Seminary in the ensuing autumn, he should first place Herbert in the Chippeway Mission School.

It was a pleasant circle that assembled every

evening of that summer, upon the little vine-clad porch of the rectory. Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy, Bessie and Emma, Willie, Herbert, and Mary, formed a quiet but happy household band, whose counterpart it would be difficult to find. Bessie was delighted to be amongst them once more, and her pleasure was greatly enhanced by the society of Emma, who, she was delighted to find, soon took a strong hold upon the affections of the whole family. As to Herbert, her face seemed to have a strange fascination for him. Unconscious that the customs of polite life forbid too eager a gaze upon another's face, he would sit with his eyes fastened upon her countenance until she would have been thoroughly abashed, had she not known that it was the simple tribute of an unaffected admiration. The light had returned to her eye, the bloom to her cheek, and the sunshine of happiness to her face, and Herbert was by no means alone in thinking her singularly beautiful and attractive. Interested in him, through Bessie, long before she had seen him, Emma now really enjoyed his society. Her youthful imagination invested him with a thousand charms, which

under other circumstances, and in a better condition of life, he would not have possessed, and the still unexplained mystery of his early life, lent a romantic tinge to his character which rendered his company an agreeable variation from the dull uniformity of ordinary society.

As, night after night, they sat in the soft moonlight, Bessie's plans for the future were not unfrequently the subject of conversation. Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy proposed for her a period of respite and relaxation, an interval of rest between the duties of the school-girl and the toil of a teacher's life, for to this sphere of usefulness Bessie had consecrated herself. But she determined that she would enter immediately upon her duties, and wished to instruct a few children of the Church. Many more scholars were found for her than she was willing to take charge of; the arrangements were very soon made, and every thing prepared for her school to open with the Fall session.

The weeks flew by too rapidly for all, and the pleasure of the last fortnight was sadly marred by the anticipated separation. The same bright September morning that saw Bessie inaugurated

into her new duties, saw, also, Emma leave for her distant home, and Willie and Herbert, with sad faces and sadder hearts, depart from the pleasant home circle, whose companionship they had so much enjoyed.

CHAPTER XV.

"How shall we 'scape th' o'erwhelming Past?
Can spirits broken, joys o'ercast,
And eyes that never more may smile,
Can these the avenging bolt delay,
Or win us back one little day
The bitterness of death to soften and beguile?"
KEBLE.

THREE years passed away, and yet, with all their changes, they glided pleasantly with the Rector's family. Bessie, who had at first undertaken to teach merely from a sense of duty, and because she was conscientiously opposed to leading an idle and a useless life, had now become interested in her employment, was warmly attached to many of her scholars, and exercised an influence over them which it was quite surprising that one of her years could wield.

Herbert had gone to the mission-school, and his expenses had been defrayed by the united efforts of Bessie's scholars and the children in

the Sunday-school, assisted by occasional hand some donations, sent through Emma, who had continued faithful to her promise of endeavoring to enlist sympathy and assistance for him. His teachers gave the most encouraging accounts of his progress, and his moral and religious character was above reproach. His warm attachment to Willie, so far from being diminished by separation, seemed to grow with his growth and strengthen with his strength. His first letter was addressed to Willie, and they had corresponded regularly ever since he had learned to use a pen. As soon as he could express his thoughts, he had declared his intention of assisting Willie in teaching and Christianizing his own race, and to this determination he steadfastly adhered. To this one great object all his energies were devoted; it was always before his mind, and to prepare himself, as speedily and as thoroughly as possible, for this great work seemed the sole aim and purpose of his life. The rapidity of his progress was a subject of great amazement to his teachers, and they frequently remarked, with surprise, that the simple religious truths seemed observed by his mind, rather as

something whose memory was revived than as a thing altogether new to him.

During this interval, Emma and Bessie had met but twice, but separation did not weaken their attachment. They corresponded regularly, and Emma, with that child-like confidence in her friend, which was so beautiful a characteristic of their early intimacy, still continued to lay before Bessie all her doubts and troubles.

Willie's theological course was ended; he had been ordained a deacon of the Church, and he was once more at home, his young, enthusiastic heart bounding with eagerness to commence the career of usefulness marked out for him.

It was a bright, glorious morning in the early May, smiling in sunshine and breathing out perfume from myriads of flowers. From the early dawn there was an unusual stir in the village. Young hearts throbbed with mingled pleasure and pain; young faces wore alternately a smile and a shadow; young feet hastened hither and thither on some unaccustomed errand; and busy young fingers twined wreaths of roses and jessamine to decorate the chancel of the little church. At ten o'clock it was thronged. The girls of

Bessie's school, dressed in white, and wearing bridal favors, crowded round the chancel, before which stood Bessie and Willie to be united in the holy estate of matrimony. As Mr. Kennedy read the marriage-service, his voice trembled and his eyes filled at the thought, that these words, which united his children by a stronger and holier tie, would, in a measure, sunder the bond which bound them to him, and send them far away from his home to seek theirs in another sphere and among far other scenes than those of his quiet, ministerial life.

Willie had earnestly desired to go first alone to the scene of his future labors, and make some provisions for Bessie's comfort before taking her there, but to this she would not consent. She had been taught from childhood to consult duty instead of personal comfort and pleasure, and she had not forgotten her mother's lesson. She knew that this arrangement would delay the commencement of Willie's missionary work, and, therefore, she preferred to go at once with him, and to share the privations and hardships which she had fully realized, beforehand, as entering largely into the life of the Indian missionary's

wife. Ever thoughtful of other interests besides her own, she had not, in the excitement of feeling, forgotten to provide for the school which she was so soon to leave. A recent letter from Mary Seymour having informed her that her relations with the Walton family were dissolved, Lucy having now gone to Mr. Lester's school, Bessie had found no difficulty in securing her services, and she felt assured that Mary would give entire satisfaction. She had already been assisting Bessie to teach, five or six weeks, and was now prepared to take her place and carry out her plans and designs in the school.

Tears flowed plenteously at the departure of the young couple for their distant home, and not only was there a painful vacuum in the Rector's family circle, but there was a void in the Church, in the Sunday-school, in the village society, in Bessie's school, and an aching void in Mary Seymour's heart, and, as she pressed Bessie in a long farewell embrace, she whispered :—

“When you are fairly settled, and your work begun, and you wish to have a girls' school attached to the mission, write for me, and I will

gladly come, and do any thing and bear any thing to be with you."

And Bessie promised that she would.

A fatiguing journey brought them to their wilderness home, and hearts less courageous in the performance of duty would have sunk, as the Indian village, the scene of their future labors, opened upon their view. Its straggling huts, miserable and comfortless, decorated with the implements of the chase and of savage warfare; its men bedizzened with paint and feathers, strolling idly about, or reclining at full length upon the grass smoking their pipes; its middle-aged and elderly women looking worn and jaded, performing both the household drudgery and the labor of the fields; the girls and maidens spending their time in beautifying their persons according to the most approved rules of savage art, that they might attract the admiration of the youthful hunters and warriors; the children, wretched and squalid, amusing themselves with games and athletic exercises calculated to develop their muscular strength, and interspersing their play with oaths and imprecations, with quarrels and blows; all these

were sights and sounds well calculated to produce a feeling of heart-sickness in those who, young and inexperienced, had come to stem this torrent of ignorance and vice, and to transform this people into an industrious, educated, and religious community.

Willie stood hesitating a moment, and trying to determine who was probably the most distinguished man among those in his view, that he might address himself to him, when his attention was attracted by the approach of a decrepit looking woman coming rapidly towards them. The nearer she came, the more eager was her haste, and Willie had only time to remark that she was not dressed in the Indian costume, but in a poor and worn, though clean dress, such as is used by the very poorest classes in civilized life. She finally accelerated her pace almost to a run, and as she reached Bessie, she threw out her withered arms, and clasping her in a tight embrace, startled them both by exclaiming in the English tongue:—

“God bless you for coming here! Oh! it is such a long, weary time since I have looked upon a young, happy face.

Exhausted by her exertions, the old woman sank upon the grass, and when the young strangers bent kindly over her, she motioned them away, and presently said, in a feeble voice:—

“It is nothing; it will soon pass off. Do not trouble yourselves about an old woman, who has not for long years received a kind look or word, who lives alone, and will have to die alone.”

Willie and Bessie seated themselves upon the grass beside her, and a crowd, attracted by the scene, gathered round in mute surprise at the presence of the strangers.

Willie had prepared himself for his work by a thorough knowledge of the language, and now requested one of the men to show him her house, that he might remove her there, and received in reply a very abrupt and emphatic, though not unkindly meant, “There,” accompanied by a gesture towards a little cabin just visible through the trees. Willie then requested his assistance in carrying her home, representing her inability to get there alone, but, with an indescribable expression of scorn at the thought of performing so servile an office for a woman, and with a most contemptuous “Humph,” the lordly sav

age turned his back and walked away. The old woman then arose, and, protesting that she was fully able to walk alone, and rejecting Willie's offered arm, she bade them follow her as she led the way to her humble home. A small cabin, containing two rooms, and bearing the impress of the most abject poverty, yet scrupulously clean and neat, received the stranger guests, and, as she handed Bessie a chair, and motioned Willie to a seat upon a rude bench, she welcomed them heartily to her home, and begged that, while they remained, they would make it theirs, and share her slender comforts. She then threw herself upon a hard, comfortless bed, and seemed disposed to rest quietly.

Willie and Bessie had now the opportunity to scan the countenance of one of their own race, who had been the first to greet them at a place where they had only expected to see savage faces and to hear savage tongues, and who seemed to be an ancient relic of civilization, strangely out of place, where all else was thoroughly barbarous. Her hair was white; not only white as silver, but it was positively dazzling in its whiteness, and her countenance, now

that her eyes (the only good feature) were closed, was intensely ugly. Plowed and furrowed will alone express the deep wrinkles that marred her face; her complexion, swarthy and sun-burnt, formed a painful contrast to her snow-white hair, and she was so thin that the outlines of her face were sharply defined, and her features pinched and compressed almost into a shadowy tenuity. And yet a calm, peaceful expression resting upon that face, while it could not have rendered it beautiful, might, at least, have so softened its ugliness as not to make it unpleasing to look upon; but there was no such expression there. It was all of unrest, disquiet and not sorrow, that is too mild a term, but deep, abiding, ever-preying anguish of mind. The two young people gazed intently upon her face, and it terrified them to think what a weight of suffering she must have borne through life, how fearful must have been the remorse or grief which had thus left its life-long impress upon her countenance.

All at once she started up and said, hurriedly:

"Tell me where you are going, and how long you will stay with me; tell me if you will read

to me one, only one chapter from the Bible, and only one prayer from the Prayer Book, that I may, once more before I die, hear another voice besides my own pronounce those blessed words."

Simultaneously, Willie and Bessie arose and went to the bed, and standing close beside her Willie took her withered hand in his, and said earnestly and feelingly:—

"You have, then, learned to love and value the Bible and Prayer Book. Thank God for this much of comfort and sympathy in the beginning of my laborious work. There is, indeed, a strong tie uniting us to you, and I can begin with some encouragement, since I have already found one to whom the name of Saviour is not an unknown sound, and whose ideas of heavenly pleasure are not limited to the hunting-ground and the chase. We have come to live here. This is to be our home, and we have consecrated our lives to the moral and religious training of this people."

The old woman answered not a word, but slowly clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, she said:—

"O my God, Thou knowest all things; Thou

knowest that I thank Thee! Once more to hear a human voice read the words of thy blessed Book; once more to join with others and say, 'Our Father,' is so much more happiness than I ever expected again to enjoy in this world; so much, so very much more than I have deserved."

Willie waited a few moments and then asked:—

"How long have you been among this people?"

"Ever since I was of the age of that child," replied she, pointing to Bessie.

"How came you here; was it of your own choice?"

"O no! my husband became a fur-trader and settled here for the better prosecution of his business."

"Is he still living?" asked Willie.

"No, he has been dead these many years." She paused an instant, and then added, with deep sigh, "I have suffered much and deeply since I have lived here, and I have deserved it all."

Her listeners needed but to look upon her

face, to realize the truth that she had most deeply suffered, but the last sentence she had spoken made them feel that they were, perhaps, verging upon delicate ground in awakening reminiscences of her past life, so they asked no more questions.

A very frugal supper was their only refreshment after their fatiguing journey, and immediately afterwards they had prayers, and the tone of deep, earnest enjoyment with which the aged woman united her voice with theirs in the Lord's Prayer, went directly to the hearts of her young guests, and they felt that they were already beginning to experience somewhat of the pleasure of doing good, and of being a comfort to others.

Willie had been furnished by Christian friends with money for the erection of a plain school-room, which was also to be used at present for the Sunday service; and immediately after breakfast, the next morning, he went out to look for a pleasant site for the building, and to see if he could not engage as scholars, some of the many children whom he saw every where around him. His hostess had told him that she had faithfully

endeavored, in an humble way, to teach some of them, but as she was a woman, she was treated with great contempt by the men, regarded by her own sex as a kind of witch, and looked upon as an object of scorn by the boys, so that all her efforts to do good had been limited to a few girls, who came very irregularly, and seemed but little interested in her instructions.

During Willie's absence Bessie had, for the first time since her marriage, an interval of solitude in which to reflect upon her future prospects. She had thought much and long before taking that step, and had tried very hard to realize that she was voluntarily entering upon a life of much privation, self-denial, and toil; but it had then all been prospective, and she had been cheered by the anticipation of that pure satisfaction and pleasure which a conscientious discharge of duty, and a voluntary sacrifice of self for the good of others, must ever bring. She had now arrived at the scene of her labors; the hardship was no longer prospective, it had really begun, while, as yet, she had reaped none of the pleasant fruits of her self-denial, and in

the utter absence of every comfort of civilized life, and of every human being, except her husband, with whom she could exchange a common thought, she was already having a foretaste of the life which she had chosen. She did not regret her choice; deliberately and voluntarily she had consecrated herself to this service, and devotedly attached to him whom her young heart had chosen as the companion of her life, she was still as willing as ever to share with him the allotments of Providence; but Bessie, though an earnest-minded Christian and a loving wife, was still a human being, and there was enough around her to make her feel lonely and sad. Longing to look upon some familiar face, she went to her trunk and took out the three miniatures, in whose silent companionship she expected hereafter often to find comfort and pleasure. In a few moments, father, mother, and her old grandfather were again before her, but, of the three, she alone knew her mother, and laying the others open upon the table, she leaned her head upon her hand, and, forgetful of every thing around her, she was at once absorbed in studying those features whose every outline and

expression were so indelibly engraved upon her heart.

A quiet step behind her was unheard. A scream: "God of mercy! where did you get my father's picture?" a grasp at the miniature and a heavy fall followed in such rapid succession, that when Bessie was sufficiently recovered to move or think, she saw behind her on the floor the extended form of her aged hostess, grasping in her rigid hand that picture, the very possession of which had deprived her of the power to enjoy it. Startled and bewildered, Bessie at first knew not what to do, but in a few moments her self-possession returned, and she tried every means to restore consciousness, but in vain. She then attempted to raise the prostrate form, but her strength was inadequate to the task, and now seriously alarmed, she ran to the door, and seeing Willie in the distance, her uplifted voice of distress and entreaty brought him quickly to her side, and in a little while the aged woman was laid gently upon her bed. But Willie's efforts to revive her were as unavailing as Bessie's. She lay like one dead, except that her clenched hand never relaxed its grasp upon that picture

whose mild, gentle eyes and soft, silvered hair seemed to have the strange power to freeze the very life-blood in her veins. At last, exhausted and hopeless, Bessie sank down in a chair and gazed in silent horror upon that wrinkled countenance, on which was stamped an expression of agony which it was fearful to behold; and, as she gazed, there stole into her memory what Mrs. Kennedy had said was her mother's description of Jennie Herbert's face during those long hours of unconsciousness, while the remorse of the soul was writing its fearful accusations in living characters upon the features.

Bessie's very heart stood still with fear, for her imagination had never conceived it possible for any being living on this side the world of despair to wear such an expression of writhing torture, and it was all the more terrible because the conflict raged within, in the deep chambers of the soul, while not a muscle or fibre of the external frame moved: the body seemed petrified with absolute horror at the sight of the fearful tempest of the soul.

At length Willie, like Bessie, ceased his useless efforts, and sat down beside her to see her

die. He asked no questions; he knew that there must be some fearful mystery, but he thought that a dying chamber, the very threshold of eternity, was no place for its solution. Slowly passed the hours of this their first day upon missionary ground; and strange seemed to Willie the probability that the first holy words which he should utter in the ears of this barbarous people, would be the Burial Service over one who, in this heathen wilderness, was no stranger to the promises of God and the comforts of his Church. Silently, almost breathlessly, he and Bessie watched the quiet form. There was no heaving of the bosom; a feeble pulse, and a slow, almost imperceptible heart-throb, alone betokened life.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Oh! we have need of patient faith below,
To clear away the mysteries of such wo!"

HEMANS.

MORNING wore away into noon, and noon into the deepening shades of evening, before there was the slightest movement of the prostrate figure which they so closely watched. At length she slightly stirred, and then, as though startled by an electric touch, she sat upright in her bed, and with an irresistible fascination fixed her staring eyes upon the picture which she still held in her hand. There was no gradual awakening to a sense of what was around her, no effort to recall her wandering senses, but with a sudden bound her consciousness returned, and, with eyes almost bursting from their sockets, she seemed drinking into her very soul a sight which was likely to drive her mad. The two young people knew not what to do. If it had been terrible to look upon her with all her powers of soul

and body locked in profound unconsciousness, it was yet more fearful to see her in full possession of her faculties, and they gazed upon her now with the same hopeless impotency with which they would have looked upon a raving maniac.

At length, a sudden thought seized Bessie, and springing from her seat, in an instant she had placed over her grandfather's miniature the picture of her mother, so that the strained vision of the aged woman now took in the beautiful features of youth and innocence. The result proved as Bessie had desired. For an instant she gazed, as at first, with eyes staring fearfully wild, but then, as soft holy memories of early childhood, her sister, her home, stole over her, the poor aged heart, so wrung by remorse and anguish, was subdued. She pressed the picture to her lips, and murmured, "My own precious twin-sister;" the dry eyes were moistened, and then came a rushing torrent of tears, prostrating in their violence, but leaving the soul softened and subdued instead of tumultuous and agonized. The storm was over, and sobbing like a chastened child, the old woman lay with

her head buried in her pillow. Bessie felt infinitely relieved to see her thus. For a while she left her undisturbed, and then she went up to her bedside, and, leaning her cheek against that old and withered face, wiped away the tears and gently stroked back the wildly disordered hair. The kind touch seemed to recall her to the fact that she was not alone, and starting up she hurriedly exclaimed, with a returning gleam of wildness in her eye, "Who is this?" but when she saw Bessie's face, she remembered her young guest, and muttering "Oh yes; I remember now," sank back again upon the bed.

Bessie now gently whispered, "Aunt Jennie;" and again she started, and turning over, fixed an eager, passionate gaze upon Bessie's face, as she continued:—

"I am Bessie Melville, your own niece, daughter of that twin-sister, Mary Herbert, whose picture you hold in your hand.

With a piercing scream, the old woman leaped upon the floor, and, seizing Bessie, clasped her in a smothering embrace, and held her close to her heart, whose throbbings Bessie could dis-

tinctly hear. She then relaxed her grasp, and sinking upon her knees, while another rush of tears blinded her eyes and choked her voice, she poured out a thanksgiving so broken by sobs that Willie and Bessie could only hear the words: "I thank Thee that thou hast sent another child to fill up the heart of the poor, old, childless mother."

It could scarcely be called a joyous meeting of the aunt and niece, in that wilderness home. Days afterwards, when the fierce tempest of feeling was lulled, and they had had long conversations, they began to realize the pleasure of the tie that bound them together, in a country where all else was wild and savage; but as yet there was too much of excitement and unreality, it seemed too much like a dream, and neither of the three was able to analyze the feelings of the moment. They were only conscious of strangely mingled emotions, of which pleasure was one, but so blended with others as to be scarcely distinguishable.

The next morning found Aunt Jennie so weak and prostrate that she could not leave her bed, and as soon after breakfast as Willie had gone,

she called Bessie, and seating her on the bed beside her, questioned her earnestly and closely about her mother and her early home. Eagerly did Bessie enter upon the theme, and her eye sparkled with pleasure as she poured into the ear of her listener an account of her childhood. How did the heart of the aged aunt melt with tenderness at the recital of the death-bed scene of her little name-sake, and only once she interrupted Bessie as she described the lovely Christian character of this little child, and that was to say: "She ought never to have been called for me; she should have been named for her mother."

It was a sad tale of sorrow and suffering, of remorse and penitence, which Bessie's aunt related to her. The incidents of her early life had been minutely and faithfully detailed to Bessie by Mrs. Kennedy, and Aunt Jennie found that every circumstance was deeply engraved upon the memory of her young listener. As to the events of her maturer life, the old and worn letter which Bessie had found, and which her aunt immediately recognized as the last one she had written to her sister, was a faithful picture

of the whole. She had but little to tell which Bessie did not already know, except that the little daughter to whom she had alluded in this letter, had been taken from her at the age of three years, and carried by her father to his relations in one of the Atlantic states, to be reared and educated, but where she did not know.

"Aunt Jennie," asked Bessie, "what became of your little Herbert? I have thought very often of that child since I first read your letter, and have always felt a sort of quiet assurance that your prayers for him would be answered, and your consecration of him accepted."

"Alas! my child, I, too, for a long time fed my heart upon just such a hope as this. I know that our Father is a prayer-hearing God, and always, until in my own case, I have believed that an honest and entire consecration of a child to the service of God in Holy Baptism, would be accepted. And I still believe that such a consecration from any other heart than mine would have met with a gracious acceptance. I deserved the refusal. Wicked, rebellious child that I was, what right had I to expect that my child would ever be a comfort

to me? Oh, Bessie! you do not, you cannot know, the enormity of my sin."

She paused a moment, and then added:—

"This has been the very bitterest ingredient in my cup of sorrow. If I know my own heart, I was sincere when I offered my child to my Saviour's service, and when, like Cain, my offering was rejected, I felt literally like an outcast and a fugitive, forsaken of God and man, and, like that wretched wanderer, my heart has often uttered the bitter cry: 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.'"

"But, aunt, what reason have you to believe that your offering was not accepted?"

"I waited long, my child, and struggled hard against the conviction, but long, long years ago, it was forced upon my unwilling mind. I told your mother, in this letter, that his father had placed him in the household of the Indian chief. He remained there one year, and at intervals I continued, by stealth, to snatch short interviews with him, and spent all the time I was with him in impressing upon his infant mind the leading Gospel truths, hoping to interpose something of a barrier, however feeble, to the floods

of vice and superstition which I well knew would overflow his soul. I taught him every word of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and it was the sweetest music to my ears to hear him lisp those holy words. At length I was discovered, and, of course, received a torrent of abuse and severe threats if I ever attempted this again; but a mother is not easily daunted. I did see my child again, and was again discovered, and was then told that with the morrow's dawn a separation would be effected which would utterly defy all attempts at reunion, and would be life long in its duration. Half frantic with agony, I knew not what to do. On my knees I pleaded and entreated for my child, and when I arose from that long prayer, sinner that I was, I felt something akin to assurance, and believed that God would eventually work out for me my desires and hopes with regard to that child. I folded up, in a small bundle, a few remaining clothes which I had retained in my possession, some of the smallest of his playthings, and, in the centre of the package, I placed something that I valued as much as my own life, a little old Prayer Book, which my father gave me,

with a Bible bound like it, on my tenth birthday. He gave both books to your mother also; the size and type were exactly alike, the binding was slightly different."

"I have my mother's now," replied Bessie, "and, next to her miniature, value them more than any thing else. All that my sister and myself ever learned of the Prayer Book and the Church, our mother taught us from that little volume, which always found a place in her work-basket."

She went to her room and brought the two small books, and placed them in her aunt's hand.

"Yes," said she, eagerly seizing them, "the very same! I remember, as if it were yesterday, the very expression of my father's countenance when he placed those books in our hands, and told us that he wanted us always to keep them, faithfully to study them, and to love and reverence them more than all other books in the world besides."

"But, aunt, you have not told me what you did with the bundle after you had made it up. How did you get it to Herbert?"

"I paid a very heavy bribe to one of the Indian servants of the chief's household, and she faithfully promised that this package should go with him wherever he went. Whether or not she kept her word I have no means of knowing, except her own assurance. Since then I have never heard one word from my little boy. Childhood is gone, youth has passed away, and he has entered upon manhood, and you will acknowledge that there is ample room for gloomy conjectures, and sufficient reason for believing that a prayer-hearing God could not accept the petition of a sinner such as I am. Herbert was four years old when I saw him last, and twenty dreary, lonely years have passed since that day."

Bessie was saddened by her aunt's tone and manner of utter hopelessness, and felt herself obliged to acknowledge that scarcely any human faith could have survived such long-continued discouragements, and her own faint but long-cherished hopes with regard to Herbert were now, by these words, entirely extinguished.

At last she said in a faint voice, strangely inconsistent with her words of encouragement:—

“Try, dear aunt, not to be utterly hopeless. Do you not remember that one of the hymns in the Prayer Book says:

‘God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.’

It seems most improbable, it is true, that amid all these adverse circumstances, the child whom in baptism you dedicated to the work of an Indian missionary, should ever fulfil that destiny, but with God nothing is impossible.”

While Bessie thus comforted her aunt, she thought of Willie’s friend, the Indian in every thing save his Christian belief and prayer; but the thought was too dim, and confused, and indistinct, even to take the form of hope, and she dared not indulge any such idea upon such slender foundations. She was for an instant plunged in thought so deep, that she did not hear the first words of her aunt’s reply. When her attention was again aroused, Aunt Jennie was saying:—

“No, my child, all hope is utterly and forever dead, and I find this rest of hopeless certainty infinitely preferable to that state of long-

ing anxiety to which I was so long a prey. Bitterly have I learned the depth of meaning contained in those inspired words, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.'"

Bessie said no more, for she felt that she had no more comfort to offer, so she asked after the little infant spoken of in the letter, who was called Mary for her mother.

"I have already told you, Bessie, almost all that I myself know of my little daughter. She was taken from me when three years old, and carried to my husband's sister, of whom I know nothing, except that she was childless, and would most probably rear my child in the midst of a Christian community, and surrounded on every side by churches, without instilling into her heart any more deep religious principle than would be done by any Indian mother in this village."

"Why, aunt," exclaimed Bessie, "what kind of a woman can she be? Who gave you such an idea of her?"

"Her brother, my husband, Bessie, told me all that I know of her character. Himself utterly regardless of the sanctions of religion, he rather

deemed it an evidence of strong intellect in a woman thus to rise superior to what he chose to call the 'trammels of superstition.'"

"O, aunt!" exclaimed Bessie, in horror and amazement, and with her usual impetuosity giving utterance to the words without pausing to think, "how could you, my grandfather's child, my mother's sister, how could you marry such a man?"

In an instant she would have given worlds to have been able to recall the words, but it was too late. She was startled to see once more that fierce, writhing expression of remorse which she had seen only once upon her aunt's face, but which she could never forget. Its impress was always there saddening and disfiguring her countenance, but only once before had she seen it aroused into wild and furious action.

It was many minutes before the amazed and distressed Bessie received an answer to her question. Bent beneath the weight of agony which these words awakened, her aunt swayed to and fro in her chair, and deep heart-rending groans burst from her lips. At length she regained sufficient self-control to be able to speak,

and turning sharply round to her niece, she looked at her with an expression which curdled the blood in Bessie's veins, and in a low, suppressed, but fearfully distinct whisper she replied:—

“I married him against my father's wishes, because I was a wayward, rebellious, ungrateful child. I left home in the way I did, and broke my poor old father's heart, because I was a cold, selfish, heartless fiend! No wonder that such a child should have lived to be a suffering, childless mother! A God of justice could scarcely have ordered it otherwise.”

She buried her face in her hands, and her whole frame trembled, and for a long time the two sat in unbroken silence; one terrified at the tempest she had thoughtlessly awakened, the other a prey to its fury.

At length the violence of feeling had partially exhausted itself, and as her aunt looked up once more, Bessie saw that the frantic expression of the eye had softened into one of the deepest sadness, and in a tone of mingled penitence and self-reproach which almost broke Bessie's heart, Aunt Jennie said:—

"I hear it, my child, always. In every song of the birds, in every breeze that stirs the branches, in every falling leaf, is sounded in my ears that broken commandment:—

"‘Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.’

"Sometimes, in the soft night-breeze, it comes to me like a reproachful voice from the spirit-world, and then, again, in the rushing storm it is thundered in my ears, as with the voice of an avenging God. Always, everywhere, in all circumstances, awake or asleep, rings the command in my ears, and every thing says to me, ‘Honor thy father!’ Oh, Bessie! it is a fearful thing always to carry in your breast an accusing spirit, always to feel the gnawings of a remorse from which there is no escape!” and the wild expression returned as she added—"I have had a foretaste of the torments of the lost!"

With a sudden bound she sprang from her chair and rushed into the adjoining room, and the slight partition could not shut out the sound, as she threw herself upon her knees, and prayed long and earnestly.

CHAPTER XVII.

It is, it is-my child! Oh! let me go
That I may once more press him to my heart,
And look at him, and touch him, t' assure
Myself that it is he, and then I will
Just lay me down and die!

THEY had been two weeks at their new home. Already Willie had begun his work of teaching, and a school, which varied in scholars as well as numbers almost every day, was assembled under the trees for two hours every morning. He found that the various expedients and devices to which he had been obliged to resort in instructing Herbert, and the patience he had been compelled to exercise with him, would be an invaluable lesson to him in his present work; and instead of becoming disheartened at finding that, when the novelty had worn off, his scholars were continually becoming wearied and leaving the school, his past experience had taught

him that the labor and the fruits are by no means simultaneous; that "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it;" and so he determined to work faithfully, and wait patiently. Every morning and evening he read the Service under the shade of a majestic oak, which stood just in the centre of the village. Sometimes a few Indians strolled up to the place and gazed idly around for a little while, and then walked away, and sometimes he and Bessie, and Aunt Jennie, formed the entire congregation, but they alone were enough to complete the number of "two or three" to whom a blessing is promised; and Aunt Jennie's hearty "Amen," which seemed to come from "heart, and soul, and mind, and strength," would have made the service delightful, even if it had not been refreshing and sustaining to the souls of the two other worshippers.

Willie and Bessie were now becoming exceedingly anxious about letters from home. They longed for that "good news from a far country," which is, in the striking language of Scripture, "like cold waters to a thirsty soul." The

nearest post-office was ten miles distant, and there was no way for Willie to get his letters without going himself for them. He waited until he thought he had allowed sufficient time for delays in the mails, and for all other contingencies, and until he read in Bessie's countenance that she could wait no longer, when one morning he announced his determination of going to see if there were any letters. He consulted Aunt Jennie as to the mode of conveyance, which speedily resolved itself into a choice between walking the ten miles, and pressing into service one of the many small Indian ponies which were grazing in and around the village wherever they could find the green sward. He asked to whom he should apply for the use of one of these animals, and she told him to go and take any one he chose, but if his civilized notions of the rights of property forbade this, he might ask permission of the first man that he met. Willie preferred the latter, and was soon ready to go, having secured as a guide through the woods, one of his little scholars mounted like himself.

About sunset, Aunt Jennie and Bessie walked

out into the woods to meet Willie. Bessie's impatience could brook no longer delay, and if, as her aunt had suggested, Willie should after all return without any letters, she felt that the disappointment would be greater than she could bear. They had not gone very far, before they saw, in the distance, Willie and his guide advancing rapidly towards them, and as soon as he recognized them, Willie waved his hat around his head, and greeted them with a cheerful shout, which assured Bessie that he had been successful. The four were soon sitting together upon the grass under a tree. Willie and Bessie, Aunt Jennie, who was happy in seeing them so much delighted, and the Indian boy, whose eyes gleamed with eager curiosity to see the contents of that package which gave so much satisfaction, and whose countenance expressed the blankest disappointment when the bundle was opened and he saw nothing but pieces of paper with black marks all over them.

There were four letters—one from home, a sort of family newspaper, containing every event, however insignificant, which had transpired since the morning of their departure, and to which

each member of the family had contributed. The second was a long letter from Mary Seymour, full of affection and Christian sympathy, and charging Bessie not to forget her promise, that she should make one of their little missionary band so soon as an assistant teacher was needed. The next was a letter from Emma, telling Bessie of her engagement to a young man, who, according to her own account, was in every way worthy of her, and whom, in the glow of her young affection, she described as a noble character, a Christian, and a churchman, and in all respects much nearer perfection than any one else she had ever known. Her only regret was, that Bessie did not know him, but she was determined that she should soon see him, for she declared, that immediately after her marriage, while other young couples went to Niagara, or Newport, or across the water to foreign climes, affection should give the direction to her journeyings, and her bridal tour should be to Bessie's missionary home in the far north-west.

“Warm-hearted and affectionate Emma!” was Bessie's exclamation, as she folded the letter,

"truly I have found in you a noble and unchanging friend."

The last letter was from Herbert to Willie, telling all his hopes and plans for the future, and how ardently he longed for the day to come when he should be ready to assist his best friend in teaching his ignorant and degraded race.

Bessie was so deeply absorbed while reading the letters that she did not realize the approach of night-fall, until reminded by Aunt Jennie that it was some distance to their home, and now almost dark; so, after having read three of them, she arose to go, reserving the perusal of Herbert's until she reached home.

She was sitting, after tea, by the little table, holding in her hand the letter from the young Indian, and thinking what a singular life his had been, and how much mystery still hung around it, and again his possible identity with Aunt Jennie's long-lost son obtruded itself upon her mind, and again she tried to expel it as a hope too vague and uncertain to be indulged. Aunt Jennie watched her closely for several minutes, and then said: "Bessie, that must be a won-

derful letter, for it has plunged you into very deep thought."

"Suppose you let me read it to you, Aunt Jennie. It is from an Indian youth who was befriended by Willie, and who has been educated and Christianized entirely through Willie's exertions, and he is now studying to be a missionary to his own people. His gratitude to my husband is unbounded, and I was thinking, just now, how strange it is that this letter, so full of warm, grateful feeling, and breathing the spirit of deep, earnest piety, and written and expressed so well, should be the production of one who, three years ago, could not speak the English language, and was an untutored, heathen Indian."

"Yes, my child, read it to me," replied her aunt, her eye brightening with interest, "I should like to hear it," and she drew her chair close to Bessie's, that she might not lose a single word.

Bessie read it all, and as she pronounced the concluding words, "Your grateful friend, Herbert," a glance at her aunt's face startled her, when she saw the livid, ashy paleness which overspread it as she exclaimed:—

“An Indian boy named Herbert!”

Bessie bitterly regretted her thoughtlessness in reading the name, for she saw at once that she had again awakened that hope which her aunt tried to assure herself had long been dead, and she hastened to undeceive her by saying, hurriedly:—

“I gave him that name, aunt. Willie wrote to me to name him, and I gave that to him because it was my mother’s maiden name.”

Poor old Aunt Jennie settled down into her usual despair, and said quietly, but with compressed lips:—

“I might have known that it could not be. Such happiness is not for me.”

Willie was sitting by, with a newspaper in his hand, but listening attentively to what was going on. Like Bessie, he, too, had often wondered if it were possible, that this Indian whom he had befriended and educated, could be the son of this desolate old mother. A thousand times he had recalled the chapel-scene; his clear, distinct enunciation of the Creed, and his familiarity with the Lord’s Prayer, when all other sounds seemed strange and unfamiliar;

the reverent bowing of his head at our Saviour's name, and the little, old, worn Prayer Book. All these things had almost convinced him, long ago, that Herbert could be none other than Aunt Jennie's son; and while, in order to give confirmation to his hopes, he had tried to gain from her all the minute details of his early life, he had carefully avoided any mention of his Indian friend to her, feeling that it would be cruel thus to awaken hope until there was a certainty that it would be realized. But now, without any volition of his own, the subject had been entered upon, he felt that the time had come when it would be right to tell her all that he knew of this Indian youth, but he did not intend to convey, by word or manner, the slightest intimation that his identity with her son had ever occurred to his own mind. Oppressed with the thought of the task which he was about to undertake, and its possible consequences, it required all his self-control to enable him to repress his agitation. He waited a few moments, and then joined the others, by removing his chair opposite Aunt Jennie, and placed the lamp so that its light fell directly upon

her face. With a quietness of voice and manner entirely at variance with his feelings, and narrowly watching her countenance, he said:—

“Aunt Jennie, would you like to hear something about that Indian boy, and how I first became acquainted with him, and interested in him?”

A feeble, languid “Yes” was her only response, and Willie and Bessie were pained to see the reaction of indifference and unconcern which had followed upon the disappointment of her momentarily awakened hope. Fearing lest he might again arouse it only to be again disappointed, he spoke cautiously and deliberately, and could not tell, from any thing in her appearance or manner, that she was even listening to what he said, until he began to describe that scene in the chapel. At once she aroused herself into an attitude of attention, her eye sparkled, her ear listened, her nostril expanded, she breathed hurriedly, and finally clenched her hands to repress the quiver of excitement that thrilled her frame. And then he told her about the Lord’s Prayer, and how, after frequent repetition, it had all come back to him as something

he had known long before, and how he could repeat these two unforgotten lessons of his in fancy, the Creed and the Prayer, when he could not make known his commonest wants in our language.

As Willie watched the workings of her countenance, he began almost to regret that he had entered upon this history, of which but one remarkable incident remained to be told; and he himself trembled with excitement as he began to relate the unfolding of that bundle, in the middle of which lay the little Prayer Book. Aunt Jennie's heart and body were now strung to the very highest pitch; she could bear no more, but pressing both hands upon her heart, she exclaimed, in a broken voice:—

“O my God, have compassion on me! Help me not to hope. Add not to my burthen the bitterness of such a disappointment.”

She rushed out of the room, was gone only an instant, and returning, she placed a little Bible in Willie's hand and said, hurriedly:—

“Tell me what that book was like. Do you remember it? Was it like this Bible?”

“I do remember it well, Aunt Jennie, and

it was exactly like this Bible. It was the very remarkable resemblance between that book and one of mine which first attracted Herbert's attention, and suggested to him the thought of going home to bring his to me. I will bring my Prayer Book and let you compare it with your Bible. Herbert's Prayer Book and mine were so singularly alike, that I never could distinguish them until I had looked for my name."

"Did he never tell you, Willie, where he got that book?"

"No, aunt; for he did not know himself. It was in his possession from his earliest recollection, and he only remembered that among the servants of the chief's household where he lived, it was regarded as a kind of charm; and he, too, had learned to look upon it in this light, and to value it on this account."

"'The chief's household'! Did he live with a chief?"

"Yes, Aunt Jennie; he was called one of the chief's family; but he told me that he occupied an intermediate place between the servants and the sons of the chief."

“Why did he leave them? Was he unkindly treated?”

“No, he never told me that he was. An accident brought him into the chapel that day. He had frequently before been upon the grounds exchanging with the boys moccasins and bead work for tobacco and pipes, and on that day was out hunting in the woods near the school. You remember that I told you he had his bow and quiver of arrows. Wearied with the chase, he was resting under a tree, when the sound of music attracted his attention; and these sounds being very different from the savage war music, to which alone he was accustomed, his curiosity was excited and he determined to gratify it. The words of the Creed, being the only ones throughout the long service which were familiar, and these seeming to come back into his memory from a period beyond his earliest recollection, were such a mystery to him that he could not tear himself away from the place until it was solved. This was what first determined him to stay there. He could not define to himself exactly what he expected, or why he imagined that he could, by staying there, learn

how he had become familiar with these strange words. Finding, after ten days, that the mystery was still unexplained, he determined to go back to his forest-home, hoping that he might there learn something which would throw light upon it. The interval of his absence, while I was so disappointed at the frustration of all my plans for him, and so worried at the loss of my book, he spent in trying to extract from the servants and members of the chief's family something about himself, but they all told the same tale: that he was the son of the chief's sister, who had died in his infancy, leaving him to her brother, to be trained by him as a warrior. He then asked them where he had learned these words, and repeated the Creed to them, but they stopped their ears and fled from him, supposing that, during his absence in hunting, he had sojourned with the Evil One, who had taught him some wizard's incantations. Then it occurred to him, that as they used at that school the same thing which he then called a charm, and has now learned is a Prayer Book, he would take his and go back again and stay a longer time, and, perhaps, he might, after a while, learn

something of its use. He compared my book, which he had, with his own, and the external resemblance was so perfect, that he concluded they must be the same thing, and that, from me, who possessed a charm so much like his own, he would, probably, find out something of its value and power. So it was, after all, the similarity in the binding of two books which decided him to remain long enough with me for me to become interested in him and to exert myself in behalf of his education. This is all that he has ever told me about himself; indeed, it is all that he knows. His gratitude and affection for me are very touching, and the accounts of his teachers, as well as my own personal knowledge of him, assure me that the result will well repay me for all that I have ever done for him."

"Tell me how he looks," said Aunt Jennie, eagerly. "Does he look like an Indian?"

"No, aunt; I do not think that he does. I said so from the first, but my teacher and all the boys laughed at me for wishing, as they said, to invest a rude, savage Indian with the mystery of romance. His skin seems to me to

be rather browned by exposure than naturally dark, and his hair is very black, it is true, but not of that raven blackness which infuses a tinge of blue, but simply black, and somewhat inclined to curl, instead of being long and straight."

"My boy had long, beautiful, brown curls, when he left me," said Aunt Jennie, musingly. "But, Willie, let me see the book; you have not shown it to me yet."

Willie brought his Prayer Book, and the first glimpse she had of it seemed to exert the same subduing influence which the sight of her sister's miniature had produced; her whole being was melted. Eagerly she seized it, and her grateful heart found its utterance in the words of the aged Patriarch:

"It is enough, my son is still alive; I wil. go and see him before I die."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Faithful remembrance of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long."

COWPER.

It required the combined persuasion of Willie and Bessie to keep Aunt Jennie from starting at once in search of her long-lost son. Neither argument nor demonstration could now have convinced her that the Indian youth, whom Bessie's fancy had named Herbert was not her own little Herbert, whom, at his baptism, she had consecrated to the work of an Indian missionary, and who, for the past three years of hopelessness and despair, on her part, had been preparing himself to fulfil the destiny which she had herself chosen for him. At first, in a maze of bewilderment between hope and fear, assurance and doubt, she could not realize the blessed

truth, but the more she reflected upon it, the more she was convinced that Willie's friend could be none other than her own child, and she adored and wondered at the mysterious workings of that Providence which, in Herbert's case, as in that of Joseph, had brought good out of evil. And how did the old mother's heart cling to Willie, as the human agent by which all this had been effected, and she exhausted language in trying to express her gratitude.

Willie wrote at once to Herbert, to get leave of absence and come immediately to him. He told him who he was, that he was Bessie's cousin and, therefore, his own, and that his old mother bade him come quickly for she could not wait. The astounded Herbert needed no urging. A crowd of tumultuous feelings sped him on to the most hasty preparations for his journey, and he was very soon on his way to the place which, ever since Willie had been there, he had looked upon as his future home, but where he little dreamed of finding a stronger tie than the one which bound him to his friend.

The meeting between the mother and son was one which Bessie and Willie could never forget

Both were afraid to believe in the reality of their pleasure: the mother because she had taught herself to think that for her, the disobedient child, a God of righteous retribution would, in this world at least, show nothing but the severest judgment; while to Herbert the Indian, without friends or family, with no inheritance except the implements of the chase, no religion except the rites of a heathenish superstition, and no education except in the tactics of savage warfare, the discovery that he was not what he had always been taught to believe, but the son of a Christian mother, prayed for and wept over during all these long years of hopeless separation, would naturally seem more like a dream than a reality. Well might the mother be grateful for such a son; well might the young missionary be encouraged by the first fruits of his life of self-sacrifice. Gentle and affectionate in his disposition; humble and earnest minded, anxious to learn and willing to labor, it was at once evident what a powerful auxiliary such a man would be in carrying on the missionary work, thoroughly acquainted as he was with the Indian character, their modes of life and habits

of thought, and the avenues by which most readily to reach their perceptions. It was touching to see the mother with her newly-found child; her long-starved affections seemed to have found something on which to expend themselves; his presence shed a glow of warm sunshine upon her ice-bound heart, and the ray of pleasure which now struggled into life, amid the shade of sadness and remorse which ever rested upon her countenance, was like the sun-beam fringing the edges of the sable cloud and lighting up its gloom. She could not be content if Herbert were out of sight, and would gently stroke his hair, or lay her withered hand upon his fresh, young cheek, as if striving, by the combined evidence of all her senses, to convince herself that he was a substantial reality, a veritable human being, "bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh."

But the time soon came when this brief happiness must be ended by separation. Herbert had learned ever to heed the call of duty, and he felt that he had now suspended his studies as long as it was right to do so. He longed to stay just where he was, with a mother whose affectionate care had the charm of novelty added

to its other pleasures, and with friends to whom he was so warmly attached, and in a place which he was peculiarly fitted to occupy, and where he might do so much good.

But the time had not yet come for him to enter upon his duties. There were yet twelve months of study before his course would be completed, and he knew full well that his usefulness would be greatly marred if he should begin his work before he was fully prepared.

He was to leave on the following morning. Hearts were sad and heavy when he announced his intention, but not a single voice, not even that of his mother, had urged him to prolong his stay. They, too, had learned that pleasure must yield to the requirements of duty.

They were sitting, in the evening, in the door of their little cabin, and the quiet moon, as her glance rested upon the many hearts and homes in this lower world, found not a more calm and peaceful home-scene than this cottage in the wilderness afforded. Serene and affectionate and grateful hearts were sheltered beneath its roof, and the blessing of Him who "loves those who love Him" rested upon it.

The approaching separation had cast its shadow upon them, and the four had been trying to encourage themselves and each other with anticipations of reunion in another year, and of the zeal and energy with which they would carry on the work which, by that time, would be fairly begun.

But the conversation grew less and less animated. Each one felt himself making an effort in which his feelings did not sympathize, and at last it ended in a profound silence, which spoke to the heart as plainly as words, for each knew the burden of the others' thoughts. It lasted some time, but Bessie was the first to break it, as she said:—

“I wish that Mary could be with us to-night, and then our little missionary band would be complete, and we would have a sweet foretaste of what our family circle will be twelve months hence.”

“Who is Mary?” inquired Herbert.

“Why, Herbert, did you never hear of Mary Seymour, my dear friend, and your future co-adjutor in the missionary work? If not, I have been sadly negligent, and beg leave now for-

mally to introduce you. Of course you remember Emma Walton?"

"Indeed, Bessie, I shall never either forget her, or the feelings that I had when I first saw her. Unaccustomed as I then was to female beauty of so delicate a type, I was almost entranced."

"Well, Herbert, Mary Seymour was a governess in Mr. Walton's family, and Emma was taught by her before she went to Mr. Lester's school. I went home with Emma at Christmas, and it was there that I saw and learned to love Mary. I have since discovered that there is very much in her character to excite affection and esteem, and I now love her for herself, but I did not wait to find this out before I was exceedingly interested in her; indeed, this interest was awakened before I ever saw her."

"How so, Bessie?" inquired Herbert, with surprise.

"Because, Herbert, Emma had told me what a striking resemblance there was between her face and my mother's in that picture which I showed you the other day. I thought it was a wild fancy, and did not, of course, believe it;

but, nevertheless, it made me very anxious to see her, and prepared me to love her.”

Aunt Jennie now assumed a listening attitude, but she did not speak a word.

Bessie continued:—

“The strangest thing of all is, that though the whole contour of the face is like my mother’s, yet the most striking likeness is in the eyes. Now, my mother’s eyes had a very peculiar and singularly beautiful expression and, with my unbounded admiration of them, and avowed disbelief that such another pair could be found in the world, the resemblance must have been wonderful for me to have been willing to see and acknowledge it.

“Where is she from?” inquired Aunt Jennie.

“Originally from New York, I believe, aunt. She was reared by a wealthy aunt, but her home was not happy, and, just as soon as she was old enough, she undertook to support herself by teaching.”

“Did she know any thing of her mother or her family?” again asked Aunt Jennie.

“Very little, aunt, and what she did know was by no means pleasant. There was some mystery

about her which has never been solved, and which has cast a shade of sadness over her whole life. I suspect that either her mother must have been a very bad woman, or her aunt a very cold, heartless one, for she certainly has tried to leave Mary under the impression that she ought to be ashamed of her, though Mary says that she never has succeeded in doing so. It is this love and reverence for her mother, in spite of every thing, that I particularly admired in Mary; this heroic determination to cherish for her memory a daughter's affection, until she has been assured, beyond a doubt, that she was guilty of something so fearfully wrong that she must have forfeited even a daughter's love."

"Where is she now?" asked Herbert.

"She has charge of the parish school belonging to Mr. Kennedy's church, where I taught during the interval between my school-days and my marriage."

"Did you say that she was one day to be my companion in the missionary work?"

"Yes," replied Bessie. "She made me promise to let her know so soon as the services of another teacher are required in the girls' school

which I have recently opened. I hope that I shall be ready for her certainly in the course of another year, and you can bring her with you when you return to us. By that time I hope that the mission house, now in process of erection, will be completed, and that, when you come back, you will find Willie preaching to a congregation in a neat little church, with a rectory adjoining, wherein reside Willie, and Bessie, and Aunt Jennie, and where, too, there will be a nice little room appropriated as a special sanctum for our cousin, Herbert the Deacon."

"You have drawn a pleasant picture, my enthusiastic Bessie," said Willie, smiling. "You forget that you are in a wild, Indian waste, and have allowed yourself but twelve months to work this mighty change."

"Yes, Willie, I always was enthusiastic and impetuous from early childhood, and I find that I leap to results in life, as I do to conclusions in argument, utterly disregarding all intervening obstacles. But if it is, as you say, a pleasant picture, it cannot be wrong to anticipate and hope for it, even if we should never realize it."

The next day, Herbert departed, and carried with him quite as aching a heart as those which he left behind. Stranger as he was to the endearments of home and the pleasures of the domestic circle, he had found them specially soothing and delightful, and he already began to experience the struggle that it would cost him to plunge again into his studies, and to have for his only companions the less gentle spirits of his own sex, each one busied with his selfish concerns, and striving to prepare himself to launch out into the great world.

The weeks rolled slowly by, with the same routine of daily duty. Day by day wrought no perceptible change, but, in the course of months, Willie could perceive that the seed which he faithfully scattered were not all lost. In his intercourse with the Indians, his mild and gentle manner won their confidence, and, accustomed to regard the white man with suspicion and distrust, as only seeking out the Indian in order to overreach him in trade, or drive a hard bargain with him; when, after weeks and months of daily intercourse, they became convinced that the young teacher had no

such designs, they regarded him, at first, with surprise, and then with respect and esteem. As to Bessie, they looked upon her with wonder.

A woman treated with the deference and affection which Willie ever manifested towards her, was to them a strange sight, and they finally solved the mystery by concluding that she was a being of an entirely different mould from the women of their race, and occupied a middle place in creation between man and the Great Spirit, and hence, they treated her with a respect almost amounting to reverence. Her school consisted now of about a dozen girls, who were quite regular in their attendance; and their minds were beginning to absorb somewhat of her instructions.

Willie worked very hard. Beside the labor of the boys' school, his daily service, his preparations for Sunday, his intercourse with the people, which he soon found a more effectual and powerful instrument in doing good than his pulpit ministrations; beside all these, he labored personally in the erection of the mission house, and spent some hours of each night in trans-

lating the Liturgy of the Church into the Indian tongue.

Once a week their hearts were cheered and encouraged by letters from home; and to go for them, and to see Bessie's bright, happy face, as he never failed to bring back a budget with him, soon came to be Willie's greatest recreation and pleasure.

One day, he brought, among others, an unusually long letter from Mary Seymour. Aunt Jennie, who was sitting by when it was unfolded, pronounced it to be a perfect newspaper, but in this she was mistaken, for, unlike a newspaper, it treated only of one theme, and that was the same old mystery of her early life. She had just received tidings of the death of her aunt, and with the letter came a box containing some old-fashioned jewelry and trinkets, which could only be valuable from association, and which she conjectured had once belonged to her mother. But that portion of the letter which riveted Bessie's attention, and which she read breathlessly, was this:—

“Among the other trinkets was a double-cased gold locket, which opened with a spring, and

out of which dropped a slip of paper, whose fall was unnoticed as my eye rested upon the picture; so perfect a counterpart is it of the miniature of your mother which, you say, I so strikingly resemble, that, although it seems impossible that it can be the same, yet I must believe that it is until I hear from yourself that you have yours in possession. I was so utterly amazed, that I could not take my eyes from it, but sat and gazed upon it like one in a stupor, for how long a time I know not. At last, when my senses returned, I saw the slip of paper lying in my lap, and, on opening it, my astonishment was not diminished when I read only the words:—

“‘MARY SEYMOUR’S MOTHER.’

I was now almost frantic. It seemed so cruel, so heartless, to tell me this and no more, that I could not believe it possible that any human being would have done it, and I searched diligently everywhere throughout that box, and pressed every part of it, hoping to discover a secret spring which would reveal some document giving me the desired information; but

my search was vain, this was all. The locket is evidently very old, and has on its back the initials 'J. H.' I have told you that my mind, by a natural instinct, always revolted from the prejudices against my mother which my aunt endeavored to instil, rather by insinuations than by positive accusations, and I am now convinced that my filial instincts did not mislead me. The heart that shines out through this beautiful, youthful face, beaming with happiness and radiant with innocence, could not be otherwise than pure. With my heart-sick longing, I have always felt my need of a mother, and if this be a faithful picture of what mine was, it is no wonder that the child of such a parent should have felt most keenly the want of gentle maternal guidance.

"It is very hard, almost impossible, for me to overcome all feeling of unkindness and bitterness towards my aunt, although she now sleeps in that narrow home whither resentment should not dare to follow her; but her obstinate and persevering silence upon a subject with which I am now satisfied that she was thoroughly acquainted; above all, the cruel intimation which

she gave me in my last conversation with her about my mother, that it was not impossible that she might still be living somewhere; all this seems so cold and heartless, and, withal, such unnecessary unkindness, that heart and mind grow sick and weary in the vain effort to find a reason for it. Pray for me, dear Bessie. I feel so tired all the while, as if my whole being were forever exhausting itself in trying to explain a mystery which is, for me, inexplicably sealed and tangled."

When Bessie was alone with Willie, they talked over this letter, and, for a while, both entertained a thought which neither dared to utter. The initials upon the locket, the fact that Aunt Jennie's little daughter had been sent somewhere to the eastern states, and that it had been darkly hinted to Mary Seymour that her mother might be still living; these circumstances were scarcely sufficient to identify her with the little child who, nineteen years ago, had been taken from her mother, and carried, she knew not where. But that miniature, so strangely like her mother, what could that mean? Bessie's mind grew weary with wondering, and hop-

ing, and fearing, and, at last, she went to her trunk and took out the picture, as if to assure herself, after reading Mary's letter, that she still possessed it.

In the marred, and wrinkled, and weather-beaten countenance of her aunt, stamped with the impress of suffering and self-reproach, Bessie could not trace the slightest resemblance to that mother's face, whose pale and wasted outlines were so lighted up by a spirit at peace with God and man that sickness, and even death, could not rob it of its beauty; but she remembered that Mrs. Kennedy had told her that, in childhood and early youth, the twin-sisters were so wonderfully alike, that few, except their father, could distinguish one from the other.

Bessie and Willie had talked about the letter and the strangeness of its contents, but neither had yet given utterance to the thought struggling in the minds of both. At last, Bessie looked around, as if to satisfy herself that they were alone, and then, as if afraid lest the very walls might hear and carry to her aunt the utterance of a false hope, she whispered:

"Willie, suppose that Mary Seymour should

be Aunt Jennie's little Mary. What do you think, Willie? Can it be?"

"Hush, Bessie," said Willie, "do not say it, do not think it until we have clearer proof. Never give Aunt Jennie the slightest intimation of the contents of that letter; it would be cruel thus to torture her with hope, and fear, and suspense."

And so Bessie and Willie never told Aunt Jennie any thing of that letter, whose remarkable length had attracted her attention. They frequently spoke of it to each other, and they wrote to Mary, affectionately and sympathizingly, but neither did they tell her of the hope that they entertained, although it was daily growing stronger in proportion as they thought and talked of the strange miniature.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Where is it mothers learn their love?—
In every Church a fountain springs,
O'er which th' eternal Dove
Hovers on softest wings.
Blest eyes that see the smiling gleam
Upon the slumbering features glow,
When the life-giving stream
Touches the tender brow."

KEBLE.

AUTUMN and winter wore away in vigorous, active employment. With but very few of what would be called the comforts and necessities of civilized life, in a rigorous climate, which seemed to demand a greater amount of both, they were yet contented and happy, in the performance of duty, and scarcely conscious that they were less comfortable than they had been in their rectory-home, in their own warm and pleasant southern climate.

It was with ever-increasing delight that the young missionaries watched the change that was

evidently being effected in the people for whom they labored. They felt that they had been wonderfully blessed in their great enterprise, for both being young, enthusiastic, impetuous, and prone to be easily discouraged, if they did not see immediate results, a merciful God had not compelled them to wait long before he showed them the fruits of their toil. And they were contented and happy, working cheerfully, gratefully enjoying their blessings, and submitting, without a murmur, to all their privations.

During the months of the ensuing spring and summer, the buildings went up rapidly, and when the appointed twelve months were past, which Bessie had allowed for the completion of the picture whose outlines had then existed only in her imagination, they were all obliged to acknowledge that, for once, her enthusiastic nature had not overdrawn the reality. Very considerable contributions from the church and Sunday-school of Mr. Kennedy's parish, and also from Mary Seymour's scholars, whom she found no difficulty in interesting in the labors of their former much-loved teacher; these, together with a very handsome donation from Mr. Walton,

had supplied a fund sufficient to realize Bessie's dream.

A wooden church, with its plain, simple materials moulded into a perfect little model of church architecture, with its spire and crost pointing heavenward in the midst of earthly degradation and ignorance, was typical of that moral and intellectual elevation to which the religion, of which it was the emblem, would raise the darkened natures around it. Close by, as if reposing under the shadow of the church, was the rectory, Willie's and Bessie's home. Sheltered by beautiful oaks, and resting upon a soft, green sward, perfectly plain, for thus it must necessarily be, yet as clean and bright as Aunt Jennie's scrupulous neatness could make it, it was as sweet and smiling a picture of home as could be found anywhere throughout the land. At a little distance, on a gentle elevation, stood the mission house, containing large and well-ventilated school-rooms, plainly, but comfortably furnished, where Willie and Bessie spent several hours every day, instructing boys and girls in the plain truths of religion, in the rudiments of education, and in the con-

cerns of domestic life. From the windows of this building, the eye rested upon fenced fields waving with corn and grain, where the plow was drawn by those little ponies, that, two years before, were wandering idly about in search of food; and they were driven by men, who, at that time, lazily dragged out their useless lives in smoking, drinking, and hunting.

The church, the home, the mission house, formed a prospect lovely alike in its moral aspect to the Christian heart, and in its quiet beauty to the lover of nature.

Such, at least, it seemed to Emma Walton and her husband as they drove up to the door of the rectory, where Bessie's beaming face, and scream of delight, and claspng embrace, formed a welcome which well repaid them for all their fatigue and discomfort in fulfilling their promise.

Bessie's home wore its most smiling aspect for the reception of her friend. The muslin curtains, looped back with bouquets of wild flowers, the nicely-polished floors, the softly-tinted walls, decorated with a few simple engravings, the air of peace and comfort, all made Emma think that it was the very pleasantest home she had

ever seen, and, as during their brief visit, she and her husband formed a part of that domestic circle, they found it hard to realize that they were in the midst of barbarism, and that from every door and window of that abode of happiness and religion, the eye could only look upon the scenes of savage life. Among the engravings, there was one which Emma never grew tired of studying. It was a photographic picture of Mr. Lester's school, sent by him to Bessie, and it brought before the mind of the girls, in minute detail, every locality in that well-remembered and much-beloved spot. The little church in which Emma had been baptized, the window of her room just opposite, where Bessie sat during that sad Good Friday, while she watched, as she supposed, her dying friend, the school-rooms and the spreading tree, beneath whose branches they had studied the Prayer Book during the long summer evenings; all these things were before them in life-like reality, and it was a part of the pleasure of every day to study this picture together.

This expected visit from Emma had been the food of Bessie's heart for months before, and,

unlike most anticipated pleasures, the reality had not disappointed her. She found Emma all that she could wish her friend to be, and if the result, in Herbert's case, was an encouragement to Willie, surely Bessie had every reason to be thankful for the abundant harvest of Christian virtues and principles in Emma's character, which had sprung from the seed that she had sown during the intimacy of their school-days.

Warm-hearted, affectionate, and unselfish, firm only where principle was to be surrendered, and always yielding where selfish inclination was to be given up, quiet and unobtrusive in her religious life, but always and in all things guided by its motives, trying to be like her Saviour in that comprehensive charity which embraces all the world, and yet, like Him, uncompromising in the defence of truth, loving the Church with a daughter's affection and reverence, and fully appreciating and using the privileges which she enjoyed in that fold, Emma Walton's was a character which Bessie might well love and admire, and she felt that she never could be thankful enough for the privi-

lege of leading such a heart to the Saviour and to his Church.

Of Edward Grafton, Emma's husband, Bessie found that her friend had not given her an exaggerated picture, and it was by no means the least pleasant part of this visit to Bessie, that it afforded her the opportunity of assuring herself that Emma had entrusted her happiness to one who seemed so entirely worthy of her, who appreciated the treasure that had been committed to his keeping, and intended to guard it faithfully and tenderly. And Bessie was pleased, too, to see how entirely he sympathized with Emma in her love for the Church, and how they both seemed to have commenced their married life with this idea uppermost in their mind; that they were not to live for themselves and their own happiness alone, but that it must be both their duty and their pleasure to do something for the cause of Christ and of his Church.

Altogether this reunion was a charming and refreshing little episode in their missionary life. It would be difficult to tell which of the number enjoyed it most, and as each day of the brief

fortnight drew to a close, and as each "good-night" was exchanged, it was with a sad feeling they remembered that they had one day less to spend together, that the dreaded separation was one day nearer. The wheels of time seemed to roll with doubly increased rapidity. The day of departure came, the sad farewell was spoken, and when her friends were lost to view in the distance, Bessie went for a few minutes to her own room, not to repine and murmur that they were gone, but, on her knees, to thank her God for the great pleasure that He had granted her.

During the week following their departure Willie's labors were unusually increased. They had been surprised and delighted by the arrival of a stained chancel-window, a present for the church from Bessie's former scholars; and Willie, though entirely unaccustomed to such work, was yet afraid to trust it to another, and therefore took upon himself the unusual task of putting it together. Carefully and patiently he worked until it was all completed, and then he and Bessie, and Aunt Jennie, stood silently and gratefully gazing upon it, as the bright rays of the declining sun streamed full upon it, and re-

vealed its rich and beautiful coloring. The picture was in harmony with the name of the church, "St. John's in the Wilderness," and the prominent figure was that of the forerunner of our Saviour, "clothed in raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins," prepared to commence the first missionary journey ever undertaken.

The three spoke not a word, but stood and gazed awhile, and then silently left the church with hearts full of grateful thanksgiving.

As they were returning home Bessie said: "Willie, at this time to-morrow evening I expect that our family circle will be complete. Herbert and Mary will, I hope, then be here."

"God grant it," were the few but earnest words of Aunt Jennie, while Willie replied:—

"Do not be too sanguine, Bessie. To-morrow is, I think, the very earliest time that they could reach here, and there may be many detentions on the way to postpone their arrival several days. You always forget, Bessie, that here, in these wilds, we cannot calculate journeys and arrange distances with the precision with which they can in the civilized world."

"That is what you always say, Willie," replied Bessie, laughing, "and yet I know not how it is, but my impatience and enthusiasm have not often lately outrun the reality. Look at this picture," added she, pointing to the church, and the mission house in the distance, "when I sketched it twelve months ago, you thought it so improbable that none but a childish fancy could have ever conceived it."

"I acknowledge it," said Willie. And I sincerely trust that my little wife may find her present expectations with regard to the arrival of our friends, and every other dream of happiness that she may ever have, as fully realized as she has that fancy picture."

They had now reached the rectory, and as they entered the little parlor, the deepening twilight just afforded light enough for them to see that it was not empty. A bound, a scream, and Herbert was locked in his mother's arms, and Mary Seymour in Bessie's. It was a long time before Aunt Jennie could release her son. She kissed him and murmured thanks over him, and again and again tried to let him go, but in vain. Her arms would not relax their hold,

and she held him in her embrace until Bessie laughingly declared that Aunt Jennie must not appropriate him altogether to herself, and releasing Herbert from his mother's grasp she welcomed him home.

She then took Mary Seymour by the hand, and led her up to her aunt, who approached with extended arms, and a cordial welcome on her lips. It was so dark that she came almost in contact with Mary before she could see her features, but when she did see them, she stopped short, and stood as if turned into stone. The extended arms did not embrace the young stranger, and the words of welcome died upon her lips.

As soon as she could speak, she bade Bessie follow her, and hurried out of the room. Bessie hastened after her, and found her panting with excitement.

"What is the matter, aunt?" she inquired anxiously.

"Who is she, Bessie? My child, if Mary Herbert could ever come back from the spirit-world, and assume the form and features which she bore when I last saw her, she could not be

more like herself than that child is. Who is she?"

"I have told you, aunt, long ago, all that Mary Seymour knows of herself. She has no recollections of her parents; her earliest associations are connected with the aunt who reared her."

"It startled me very much," said Aunt Jennie, musingly. "I thought, for an instant, that my sister was before me."

She sank into deep thought, and Bessie quietly left the room, and spoke a few words to Mary Seymour. After some minutes she returned to her aunt, bringing an old-fashioned locket which she placed in her hand, and holding the candle so that the light fell directly upon it. It was instantly recognized, and with a trembling hand she touched the spring, and as the picture was revealed, she exclaimed:—

"Myself! my own miniature, which I have not seen for nineteen years. Where did you find it?"

Bessie replied by placing in her aunt's hand the slip of paper which had fallen out unobserved.

Aunt Jennie read. Her head grew dizzy and

her brain reeled, and exclaiming, "God of mercy! can it be?" the weight of such unexpected happiness seemed to stun her, and she sat perfectly still, asking no question, and making no effort to move.

The meeting between the mother and daughter may not be described. There was in that household no boisterous outburst of feeling; their joy was too deep and full for this. There was a profound silence, first of amazement, and then of intense feeling; a silence which none dared to break, except the happy old mother, whose lips murmured a whispered thanksgiving, which none could hear except the daughter who was pressed to her bosom, and she only caught the words of the aged Simeon:—

"Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace."

Happy, intensely happy, were the days and weeks as they now sped by. Aunt Jennie's aged form grew almost erect in her new-found happiness, and her step became elastic and buoyant as she pursued the daily round of domestic duties. Her face no longer wore its dark shade of gloom, but an expression of grateful pleasure

beamed from her eyes and lighted up her countenance. Her happiness was twofold. Besides the enjoyment of having her children restored to her, she seemed to read in their restoration an indication of God's favor, and to realize for the first time, that even for such grievous sin as hers, there might be in this world as well as in the next, mercy and forgiveness. Herbert and Mary entered heartily and actively into their duties, and it was an unfailing source of delight to Willie and Bessie to watch these three beings, so long isolated and friendless, and to see how they drank in the pleasure of domestic life, and clung to that home and family tie to which they had heretofore been utter strangers.

Late in the winter, a new light shed its soft glow over the family circle in the rectory, and the pulsation of a little heart and the dawn of another life linked together the souls of the young husband and wife by a new and triple bond.

There was no dissenting voice with regard to the name of the little stranger. All agreed that it should be Mary Herbert, and Bessie felt that if her little babe could only grow up to resem-

ble her whose name she bore, she could ask for her no greater blessing either for this world or for the next.

It was late, Saturday evening, Bessie was lying upon her couch, and she clasped a soft little hand as she read over the Baptismal service, and pondered deeply those vows of renunciation, which, on the following holy day, she was to assume in behalf of her unconscious infant. Willie came in wearied with his day's work, and throwing himself upon a chair, said:—

“Bessie, there is a box over at the mission house for you. As I thought we would not open it until Monday, I ordered it to be deposited there.”

“Why, Willie, what can it be? Is it a large box? Did you say it was sent to me?”

“Yes, Bessie, it is something for you. I should have thought that it contained the books that I sent for, but I know that father would have addressed the box to me. It is quite large and very heavy. I cannot imagine what can be in it.”

“I must see the inside of it this night, Willie,” said Bessie laughing, “or I shall have no

sleep, so please have it sent for and open it at once."

"Oh, no, Bessie," pleaded Willie, "I am so very tired. Let us wait until Monday."

A merry voice called out from the adjoining passage:—

"You might as well give it up, Willie; nobody ever yet successfully contended against a woman's curiosity. I will go and have the box brought, and you shall open it, and Bessie shall see what is in it, and then go to sleep comfortably."

"Thank you, Herbert," returned Willie, laughing, "I believe you are right. Send for the box, and we will soon see its contents."

It was accordingly brought, and found to contain a small Baptismal Font, of exquisite workmanship, and of the purest Italian marble. A wreath of beautifully carved flowers surrounded the basin, which was encircled by the sentence: "Suffer the little children to come," and on a corner of the pedestal, where none but the most careful observer would notice it, was the name "Emma," delicately inscribed within a tiny wreath of buds and leaves. With the present

came a sweet, affectionate note from Emma, telling what pleasant memories she and her husband had brought away with them from that missionary home, and saying that she could not be satisfied until she had placed in that church a memorial of Bessie's first missionary work in enlightening and instructing her. She also said that a small organ was on its way, a present to the Church from her father.

Willie and Herbert were extravagant in their admiration, and while the latter ran off to call his mother and sister, Bessie said:—

“Again, Willie, you will have to acknowledge that your wife's impatience has led to a desirable result. I know that you would greatly prefer that our little Mary should be baptized from the font, rather than from a china bowl applied to common uses, which you know must have been the case if we had waited until Monday before opening the box. And besides this, it will always be a pleasure to me to have the baptism of my little daughter associated with the memory of my best beloved friend.”

“Yes, Bessie, I acknowledge that you were right again, and I am sincerely obliged that you

insisted so strenuously upon having your wishes gratified, and glad that your curiosity triumphed over my indolence."

The next day, a pure bright Sunday morning the rite of Holy Baptism was administered, for the first time in that little church, before a large and attentive Indian congregation. Encircled in Herbert's surpliced arms, the infant stranger was signed and sealed by him as "Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto her life's end;" and the young father, and the happy Aunt Jennie, and the gentle Mary, were the sponsors for the little Mary Herbert.

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